DEDICATION

- Poems of St.Pattanathu Pillai -

S.P.Y. SURENDRANATH VOEGELI-ARYA

உலகத் தமிழாராய்ச்சி நிறுவனம்
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TAMIL STUDIES

DEDICATION

Poems of St. Pattanathu Pillai

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Editorial Note

"It is the most difficult thing", says Tayumanavar "for anyone to renounce like Pattinattuppillaiyar." He was the richest man of the country a moment earlier and the poorest mendicant the next. The decision to renounce and the speed with which it was executed and the act were so quick and dramatic that it is difficult to conceive even. He had enjoyed the benefits of the riches and also that being one with and in God.

Thus he was qualified, more than enough to speak of the evanescence of the nature of wealth and also of the freedom after losing it.

The translator of these poems,S.P.Y. Surendranath Voegeli-Arya was educated in some of the great universities of England and Europe. His stay in South India, for how long we are unable to find out, provided him with an opportunity to come accross the writings of some of the Tamil saints. He was very much drawn to St. Pattanathupillai .

His poetry, philosophy and approach to spiritual life impressed him so much that he could not resist the urge to translate the poetry into English.

He was sure that this new philosophy would make life richer. He felt that through the translation, he was making a good contribution to the world Free-Religious movement.

Dedication is a translation of some of the poems of Saint Pattanathupillai. In the introduction he traces the history and the

events which led him to Pattinattar and made him translate his poems into English so that the Western world would know about him. There is an appendix at the end of the book.

The translation is lucid and straightforward. It points out that the religious rituals are useless and unnecessary and God cannot be realised through them. God can be reached only through serving His devotees. One of his friends J.H. Weatherall has provided a foreword. And it was edited by Will Hayes, Leader of the Free-Religious movement.

The book was first published in 1933 and it is not available now. As one of its activities, the I.I.T.S. is now bringing out a reprint of this remarkable work.

Our heartfelt thanks to Thiru.T.N. Ramachandran of Tanjavur an eminent translator who gave this rare book to our Institute for reprint.

Our sincere thanks are also due to the Hon'ble Minister for Tamil Official Language, Culture, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments, Dr. M.Tamilkudimagan and to Thiru. V.Palanichamy, I.A.S. Secretary to Govt., Department Tamil Development - Culture for their sustained help and guidance for the Development of this Institute.

DIRECTOR

Pattanathu Pillai renounced the "I" and its domineering egoism.
Pattanathu Pillai renounced the world and its evil ways.
Pattanathu Pillai was the prince of those yogis who had obtained the glorious conquest over the self and the world.
It is too difficult! It is too diffficult! His conquest over the self and the world was his own.
It cannot be attained by all.

Pattanathu Pillai lived in this world a disinterested and detached life.
Pattanathu Pillai lived in this world but was not misled by its many illusions.
Pattanathu Pillai lived in this world and worked for the redemption of the world.
Pattanathu Pillai sacrificed his all to obtain Thee.
His unique sacrifice and his superb self-conquest pleased Thee and Thou didst enter into him.
Lord, when am I goin to be Thine? When art Thou going to enter into my life as Thou didst condescend to enter into the life of Pattanathu Pillai?

St. Thayumanavar.

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Foreword

I RESPOND willingly to the request of my friend Mr. Surendranath Voegeli-Arya, that I should write a little Foreword to his English rendering of the devotional poetry of Pattanathu Pillai. He and I share the belief that devotional poetry speaks to the native instincts of the human heart, irrespective of races, creeds and colour; and that it is good for our hearts and minds to increase the stock of literature which demonstrates the essential unity of the religious aspirations of all mankind. His version of the poetry of Pattanathu Pillai is an interesting and stimulating contribution to that stock of universal devotional literature.

The thought-world of us Europeans is habituated to actual knowledge, and even in regard to devotional literature we like to have firm facts of the time and place and circumstances to give an anchorage to our ideas. Mr. Arya does something to give us concrete detail, and in his introduction he tells us who Pattanathu was, and when. It must be confessed that his introduction does not satisfy our Western curiosity for material facts as much as our bias would fain exact. Mr. Arya rejects the opinion of the Rev. Robert Caldwell, who ascribes the poems to the close of the seventeenth century. He tells us that Professor Rada- Krishnan assigns the poems to about A.D. 1000. Mr. Arya puts them a century or so earlier; to allow time for them to become so popular as they had become by 1000, if Professor Radakrishnan is right in his date. To the Western student this, vagueness is somewhat displeasing. His chronological mind is fretted when such widely different dates can even be suggested; he begins to distrust even the details offered about Pattanathu's life and friends. He wants to know what the authorities for the details are; and what the authorities are really worth. Mr. Arya's interest, however, is not in the chronology and trustworthiness of Tamil literature; and devotion inhabit a region which is above space and time.

There is such a region; and every translator knows it, and he has to rely upon it to help out the words in which the radiant clouds of his author's thought are to be represented. It is no surprise to find Mr. Arya telling us that his translations are by no means literal. His Western readers will be willing to grant that this is inevitable.

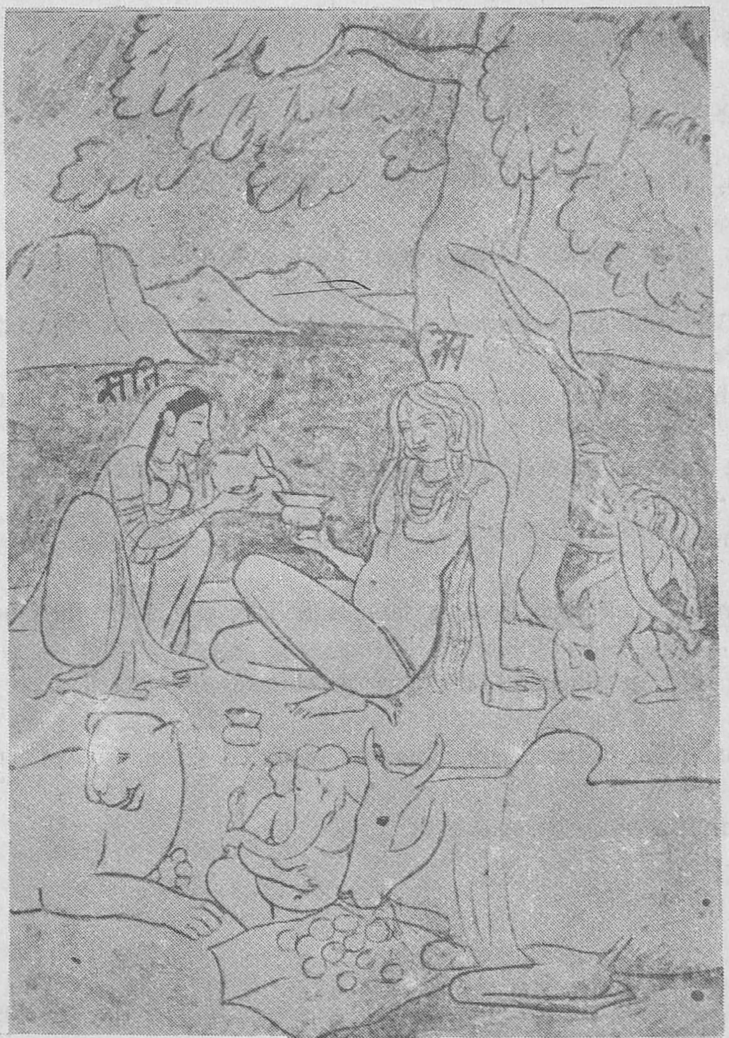
He describes his method in his Introduction with admirable frankness. "I read each poem many times; took notes; closed the book and laid it aside. First, I consciously meditated on the truths I found in the poems. Secondly, I tried to slip into his self, suspending for a moment my own views of his poems. When I woke up from

my sleepless slumber in our saint's mind, I quickly wrote down what I believed to be the true interpretations of his mind according to himself. Then again I read my translation with my notes. I copied for the press that translation which made me feel that I did not wander away from the poet's mind.

Such a process escapes from the baldness of literal translations; but there is an accuracy of the spirit which is more important than accuracy of letter, and we who know no Tamil must trust and hope that Mr. Arya's method has secured this accuracy of the spirit.

We have every reason for trusting him. He has already in other publications demonstrated his ability as a translator; and his comprehensive learning in the fields of Comparative Religion and Philosophy enable him to bring out meanings easily missed by the slaves to the dictionaries. In Mr. Arya's glowing renderings these poems of Pattanathu Pillai form an admirable collection of spiritual aspirations and exalted meditations. Deep calls to deep; soul answers to soul. Un- deterred by the insulating Oriental terms and names used for deities and aspects of the divine in these transcriptions from an Eastern mystic and poet, the Western student will find refreshment of mind and spirit; and he will thank Mr. Arya for the living labour he has given to produce this pleasing manual of piety. It will make a new link in the sympathies and the fraternities of East and West.

J. H. WEATHERALL.



SHIVAPURI

Our frontispiece gives us a glimpse of Shivapuri, the Tamil Kingdom of God. Shiva, as a devoted Servant of His creation, has given up His absoluteness and made Himself a poor selfless sanyasi. He is depending upon the love of Sati, his wife. (Sati is the love-aspect, or grace-aspect of Shiva.) Sati is feeding with her love the God who has made Himself a Beggar in the cause of His creation.

Below, in the centre of the picture, is Sati's elephant-faced son with a pen in his hand as the symbol of learning and wisdom. On one side of the elephant is a lion and on the other an ox. The animals are sitting together without hurting each other. They are enjoying their food from the same leaf. This is to show the Oneness of Life. In Shivapuri the law of Ahimsa (non-violence) prevails.

Subrahmanya or Shanmukha, the six-faced second son of Sati, is feeding a bird--the symbol of service.

It was in the year 1923 that I was requested by my friend and teacher, Dr. Hem Chandra Sarkar, M.A. the recently deceased illustrious President of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta, to accompany him to the house of Sir Annapu Parasuram Patro the then Minister of Education to the Government of Madras, in connection with the late Pandit Shivanath Shastri Memorial Fund. It was in Sir Annapu Patro's house, Pantheon Road, Madras, that I had the honour and privilege of meeting the late Dewan Bahadur Shri Rambadraiah Naidu Garu, the Zamindar of Doddappanaikanur. I knew that he was a pro- found mystic and a very well-read student of Tamil literature. While Dr. Sarkar was talking with Sir Annapu Patro I spent a few moments with the Zamindar. The little time we had was not sufficient to discuss the great social and religious problems. So we had to adjourn our talk until some other time. But, it was not till 1927 that I met him again. This time our meeting was in Kodaikanal, one of the best hill stations where some of us spend our summer months.

I went to Kodaikanal straight from a big Socio-Religious Political Conference in Maya- varam, Tanjore District, where I was sent as the President of the South Indian Social Service League, Anti-Untouchability League, N.B. Youth League and other Philanthropical Institutions, Madras, to put forward the views of the South Indian Social and Religious Reform advocates. After the Conference was over some of us had a very unpleasant time in Mayavaram in connection with the Temple Entry problem. I am a Radical Social and Religious Reform advocate. Some of my friends attempted to take four or five members of the so-called Depressed Class Community to one of the big temples there. They were not allowed to enter. I was unable to do anything. I was boycotted by the Orthodox Hindus who said that I was a Christian, and I was boycotted by the Orthodox Christians, who said that I was a Hindu. All this made me angry. I was burning with rage and fury. And when I met the Rajah of Doddappanaikanur, I poured out all my radical socio-religious reform vehemence. I started the discussion. My starting point was that we needed a New Religion to make us bestir ourselves in the cause of our land and people. He said that he did not understand me. I reiterated with wounded vehemence that we needed a New Religion. He asked me, "Why?" I laughed, as self-conceited, modern educated young Indians do, and said, "Because, we are groping in the blinding-darkness of ignorance and superstition." He did not lose patience. In an extremely gentle

and kind tone he asked me to let him know in simple language the fundamentals of the New Religion which I would like to see introduced in India. I, at once, mechanically enumerated three points: The Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, Salvation by Character. He thanked me for them and said that they were all right as far as they went but they did not go far enough. He said that he would explain by reciting a few poems from the writings of St. Pattanathu Pillai.

The Zamindar took up the first point, the Fatherhood of God and said that God was neither exclusively Father nor exclusively Mother but He was the Father-Mother-Spirit. The masculine interpretation of God as mere Father made Him a domineering War Lord Who wished to rule the world from His high heaven with an antiquated Law ofJustice which is an oldfashioned weapon in the hand of an impatient, petulant, irritable and intolerant old Tyrant. He said in his very simple but very powerful Tamil that the world was not in need of such a peevish patriarch of a Father-God, but the world certainly needed a God who had so high a conception of man and woman that He entered into their limited and imperfect life as Ardhanarishwaran and let His infinite Light shine from there in the glorious form of Shiva-Shakti. This idea of God as Shiva-Shakti, as Ardhanarishwaran, is the contribution of the Tamil people to WorldCulture. He insisted that that idea of God had so much in it, when properly understood and interpreted that it would comfort, inspire and exalt men and women irrespective of their caste, creed or colour. According to him, the idea of God that Pattanathu Pillai had in his mind was that God was a democratic Servant of His bhaktas. God was not so eager to rule and govern as He was willing to serve His children and suffer for them. He said, quoting Tirumular, that Shiva was Love and Love was Shiva. That teaching of St.Tirumular influenced all the Tamil Saints who came after him. Shiva, the Lord of all Love did not create the world out of sportive pleasure; the Love aspect in Him needed the Other and that Other was Shakti. It is for this reason that He was addressed as Shiva- Shakti, as Ardhanarishwaran. And Shakti is the immanent Shiva. In the language of a Shiva mystic, Shakti or Uma is Shiva's Arul, God's Grace.

From the standpoint of art and aesthetics, the Zamindar said, the rich potency and the latent creative power of that idea of God had in it all that was necessary to make India a peerless Paradise of Art.

As for the second point, the Zamindar continued, a good deal of the arrogance of the caste people, the selfish seclusiveness of the pandits are the result of the ignorance of Indian Culture on the part of the Indian masses and their appalling illiteracy. There are indications in the poems of Pattanathu Pillai, he said, that there must have been hypocrites, opportunitists, and monopolists even in his day. But Pattanathu Pillai never allowed them to approach him grandly about their superiority or inferiority. He was conscious of the Lord's presence in him and let every one see that where the Shiva-Shakti reigned supreme there the Light of Parama Shiva shone with greater splendour than in those places where people have made themselves abject slaves to books and the traditions of men. So he requested me to emphasize on public platforms the divinity of man and his right to approach God and enrich himself without the external aid of temple and priests. So long as we allowed our masses to live as intellectual, moral and spiritual paupers, it was not easy to get rid of bullying priests and patronising pandits. The moment the social and religious reformers succeeded in helping the Indian masses to realise the divinity of their manhood

and womanhood, without any endeavour on their part to preach the doctrine of the brotherhood of man or the sisterhood of women, all men and women will be forced by the consciousness of their divinity to live together as brothers and sisters. This, he said, is what Pattanathu Pillai did.

With regard to Salvation by character, so much of the common conception of the idea of salvation betrays the mean, degrading and selfish traits of our inward man. The Zamindar said that men thought they could buy their salvation by burning incense, by breaking coconuts and by bribing our impious priests with their gold and silver. The priests who had succeeded in making our temples markets and worship of God profiteering business seized the opportunity and they were making best use of their advantage. These external acts of worship were tricks invented by the priests for mentally, morally and spiritually slothful people. He said that so long as we had such stupid and slothful people who thought they could buy salvation as they bought toys with their copper so long we shall have medi- cine men and those who flourish on their trade in magic. He said that Pattanathu Pillai exposed such tricks.

So, said the Rajah, in a very appealing and touching manner, what we needed in our country was not the invention or introduction of a New Religion but a proper understanding of the teachings

of saints like Avvai, Valluvar, Tirumular, Pattanathu Pillai, Badragiriyar, Thayumanavar, Ramalinga and others, and a real and earnest endeavour on our part to live these teachings in our daily lives. He continued that religion was life, not dogmas and doctrines. Where religion was a reality, there Love and Freedom reigned supreme; there peace, prosperity and bliss were the inherited riches of the masses; there Salvation was not a thing of Future Life in some distant Heaven but the Consercrated Life of a Jivanmukta, here and now. He said that Pattanathu Pillai was his pattern Saint because his life in this world was the best example of active devotion to God and His children, and selfless renunciation.

In the year I met him in Kodaikanal the Zamindar of Doddappanaikanur was stricken with two great sorrows. His second son was forced to discontinue his studies in Presidency College, Madras, because of some serious sickness, and he himself was attacked by a paralytic stroke. Any other person would have allowed himself to be buried deep down under the unbearable weight of his sufferings. The influence of the teachings of our poet on his life was so great that he bore his sufferings cheerfully and discharged the daily routine of his work successfully and well.

Shri Rambadraiah Naidu was not an idle dreamer. He was a successful Zamindar who represented the South Indian Land-Holders so often in the Madras Legislative Council and in the Imperial Legislative Assembly, Delhi. He was a sound scholar of Tamil Literature and himself had written a few books on Saiva Mysticism. And this practical mystic was an earnest disciple of Pattanathu Pillai.

In November 1930, I was waiting for my beloved wife's car at the corner of the Doveton College, Ritherdon Road, Madras. A middleaged Christian gentleman who was just then entering into Ritherdon Road saw a Hindu sanyasi (ascetic) at the corner where the rick- shaws stood. The Christian gentleman accosted the Hindu sanyasi and asked him why he became a sanyasi and whether he had found God. He also asked whether he had ever made an earnest study of the "one only true religion of Christ."

The sanyasi appeared to be a very extraordinary type of man. I had not met such a man for years in my country. I had and I still have a great aversion for the orange-clad mendicants meandering about the length and breadth of India, in the name of religion, doing nothing. I have spoken and written a great deal against them. But this particular elderly sanyasi made me feel that he was no

like the rest of them. His face was so sublimely calm, so full of peace and restful. He was extremely simple and humble without sacrificing the courage or independence of his mind.

The sanyasi answered the Christain gentleman, saying that he became a sanyasi at that advanced age because it was easy for him as an ascetic to work for God and man without encumbering himself with too many things of this world. He had taken his B.A. degree when he was twenty- two years old, passed his B.L. when he was twenty-five, and had served the Madras Government in various capacities, in different parts of the Presidency, for twenty years. And he was enjoying a pension. He showed the Christian gentleman his pension certificate. I do not know why, but the sight of the certificate worked like a miracle in changing the expression on the face of the Christian gentleman. The sanyasi went on to tell how his only son who was a graduate of Madras University died in the year 1924 and how his dear wife, who stood by him in the midst of numberless persecutions from the members of his community because of his cosmopolitan views, died in the year 1925. He renounced the life of a Grihasta (House-holder) and became a Sanyasi the same year. He did not depend on anybody for any kind of help. He purchased his food with his own money and served his fellow-beings by speaking to them of the goodness and beauty of Shri Nataraja whenever and wherever it was possible without making himself an offence to the least of God's children. There was a sort of rare sweetness in his language which I am unable to reproduce here, although I feel it and enjoy it whenever I remember the whole picture.

The Christian asked the sanyasi if he had found God. His answer was brief but paradoxical. He merely said, "Yes and No." The Christian was annoyed at this answer. He said that it conveyed nothing to him. As the discussion was taking a serious turn and the people were gathering around us, I intruded and suggested thatwe should go to some other place and discuss that question carefully and patiently. I sent back the car to my beloved wife who is a very busy Doctor of Medi-cine, and went to my office one hour later for which I was chastised by my subordinates. I never told this to my godly wife fearing that she would punish me for having attended my office one hour late. I find this incident noted down in my copy of Pattanathu Pillai's poems which I purchased that very day in Madras. The notes are very meagre and I forgot all about the ascetic, the Christian gentleman and their discussion till last May.

INTRODUCTION

We all went together to the Methodist Christian Church compound and sat down on the lawn. By this time others had joined us. The explanations and answers of the sanyasi were simply glorious and elevating. I shall try my best to reproduce them as faithfully as possible from my memory.

He began to explain his "Yes and No." He said that he knew God in the sense that He was honestly and consciously striving to do the will of God in his every-day thoughts, words and deeds, as he sincerely believed, without any attempt either to deceive any one or to advertise himself. He said that such a striving itself was the gift of God. He who enjoyed such a gift experienced God. And he who experienced Him, knew Him.

He did not know God in the sense that it was not possible for a mortal to know Him in all His aspects, either in one life or in many lives. It is an eternal toil. He said that people should be everlastingly endeavouring to know Him without ever attempting to know Him fully and adequately. He said that such a pious and enthusiastic endeavour, for ever and ever, must be the religious attitude of a true bhakta. He said that such an earnest and endless endeavour to know the infinite God, fully conscious of his utter inability to exhaust the inexhaustible riches of God's infinite wisdom, goodness and love, itself was the salvation of a devotee. In his humble opinion, he continued, the man deceived himself, who said that he knew the infinite Lord who has neither beginning, middle nor end. Who is above all time and space, ,Whose essence is sinlessness and pure love, Whose knowledge is perfect beyond our finite understanding, because he had written a few books about Him or any number of books about Him, because he had talked about Him for many hours every day, or had listened to the discussions about Him from endless preachers. It is not possible for us to know Himfully and adequately. It is not possible for us to know the infinite Lord in all His infinite aspects. Few books or numberless books, fewdiscussions or endless discussions, of all ages and of all races, individually and collectively, revealed only fragments of God's goodness, beauty, wisdom and love. He said all that men needed was as much of God's infinite light as their limited minds could hold. Why should they waste their precious time in the fruitless pursuit of fathoming the unfathomable depth of God? As practical people, he continued, they must be satisfied with what little light they had received from Him who is continually revealing Himself within them and without them, and render the utmost service of which they are capable to His children.

INTRODUCTION

As for the question about "the only true religion," the sanyasi took out of his bag a copy of St. Pattanathu Pillai's poems, read three of them, wept like a child, embraced the Christian gentleman and said that was his answer. He greeted all of us reverently and left us. My western friends might think that that kind of weeping was merely a sign of senile sentimentalism. Let me assure them that this man was not a sentimentalist. At times tears reveal the inward strength of an invulnerable soldier of God, just as loud laughter reveals the slipperiness of a knave. The sanyasi was a sound and solid thinker. There was that firmness in his speech which is a characteristic feature of a powerful and mighty servant of God and man. He wept because of the narrow and bigoted attitude of people towards others' religions.

I have travelled in many countries; I have studied in some of the biggest of the Universities in Europe and America; I have come in contact with some of the most distinguished men and women in different parts of the world; I have fought many fierce battles in different spheres of my life, my formidable opponents being of all races and religions. My sorrows and sufferings have been many and intense. They have never made me weep. On the other hand they have enheartened me, and because of them I am able to understand the tears of the wronged and misinterpreted, of the poor and persecuted, of the weak and helpless. But, to-day, in this beautiful land, surrounded by so many elevating pictures, I do feel like weeping when I recall to my mind the three poems which the sanyasi recited, the way he wept, the warmth with which he embraced the Christian gentleman who put him questions and the most touching way he took leave of us, as the best answer he could give to the question, "Have you ever made an earnest study of the 'one only true religion of Christ'?" Ah ! Even to-day, in this twentieth century there are people who say: "My book is the only revealed book. My religion is the only revealed religion, My God is the only true God."

I think these two examples are enough to illustrate the influence of the poems of Patta- nathu Pillai on the life of people in South India.

The good seed which the Zamindar of Doddap- panaikanur sowed in the soil of my heart in Kodaikanal, did not perish. It was lying dormant to grow and bring forth fruit here in Switzerland.

INTRODUCTION

I feel in Switzerland, as I always felt in Darjeeling, Kodaikanal and Kotagiri. Surrounded by hills which rise one above the other with so much of grace. beauty and splendour one cannot but feel elevated. I do not know why, but the upward-climbing smoke of incense, the one pointed flame of the old-fashioned Indian lamp the heaven-piercing peaks of high mountains, flowers, perfumes and women always make me feel the nearness of God and the necessity of lifting up my heart to Him. The Rev. J.H.Weather all, Principal of Manchester College, Oxford, in one of his very kind letters to me wished that I might find Zurich a place of charm and spiritual stimulus. I have really found Zurich University such a place, and my Professors here, like my Professors in Oxford, are extremely encouraging and inspiring. It is but natural that in such an atmosphere as I find in Switzerland I should seek the friendship of so great a mystic and tyagi as Pattanathu Pillai to raise myself up to the lotus feet of God. These translations are the result of my morning devotions with our yogi.

These translation are by no means literal. Literal translations of such long mystical and metaphysical religious poems as those of Patta- nathu Pillai, rich in alliteration and rhyme, sweet in sound and language, high and heavenly in imagination, are not possible. My translations are the free renderings of the mind of our saint. I read each poem many times, took notes, closed the book and laid it aside. First, I consciously meditated on the truths I found in his poems; secondly, I tried to slip into his self, suspending for a moment my own views of his poems. When I woke up from my sleepless slumber in our saint's mind, I quickly wrote down what I believed to be the true interpretations of his mind according to himself. Then again, I read my translation with my notes. I copied for the press that translation which made me feel that I did not wander away from the poet's mind.

Who can add brightness to the sun? Who can make purer the yellow of pure gold? The spirit of Pattanathu Pillai's poems is as bright as the sun; his poems are pure as the yellow of pure gold. Ah ! there are so many invaluable treasures in the rich mines of his verse. I do not know which I should choose to discuss here. Must I discuss the truth of the holiness of beauty or the truth of the beauty of holiness? At times, I was tempted to stand still at the portal of the goddess of beauty without endeavouring to examine whether or no this goddess of beauty I find in his art had any relation to the exalted moral ideals of his consecrated life. On other occasions, I was tempted to stand at the threshold of the deity of all goodness

and truth I found in his poems without vexing myself to discuss if this deity of inward beauty, order, rhythm and sweetness had any relation to the canons of prosody invented by those who trade in rhymed verses. But a serious meditation made me feel that I sinned against the spirit of our saint. He never sacrificed one for the other. What is beautiful is holy, what is holy is beautiful; what is rich is substantial, what is substantial is rich. In his poems we find the enthusiasm and wonder of youth so well harmonised with the experience and wisdom of age. The language, form, the theme, the music and the melody of the rhythmic dance of Shri Nataraja with His Shakti whom he had witnessed in the cave of his heart--all these enchant the mind of the reader of his poems.

I shall discuss the teachings of St. Pattanathu Pillai under the three main headings of Religion, Philosophy and Mysticism. But, before I do this, let me give a brief sketch of the poet's life.

The Rev. Robert Caldwell seems to have thought that Pattanathu Pillai belonged to the 17th century. He says in his book, "Comparative Grammar" (a very solid and useful book revised and published in the year 1875, though a further revision of it in the light of modern research, criticism and scholarship of Aryan and Dravidian cultures will enhance and improve its usefulness to students of Indian Philology): "Of the poems belonging to this period which have acquired a name, one of the earliest is the Tamil version of the Prabhu Linga Lila, a translation from the Canarese, which is considered the finest composition in Tamil pertaining to the Vira Saiva or Jangama sect. Another is a small ethical treatise called the Niti-neri-vilakkam, a portion of which is much used in schools. These belong to the close of the seventeenth century, to which period also probably belong the poems of Pattanathu Pillai." Of course, this cannot be accepted.

Professor Radhakrishnan in the very brief introductory note on Saiva Literature, in his second volume on Indian Philosophy, says: "The Saiva hymns compiled by Nambi Andar Nambi (A.D.1000) are collectively called Tirumurai." Professor Radhakrishnan is nearer the truth than Caldwell.

We find Pattanathu Pillai's hymns included in Tirumurai. Nambi Andar Nambi lived during the reign of Kulashekara. Kulashekara reigned in the latter part of the ninth century. There is nothing extravagant in thinking that it takes some time to attain to the position to which our saint's hymns have attained.

INTRODUCTION

In my own opinion, we must fix Pattanathu Pillai's time somewhere in the latter part of the eighth century or the earlier part of the ninth century. Anyhow not later than the ninth century.

According to Pattanathu Pillai, religion is active devotion to God, Shiva, Who is the living embodiment of All-Truth, Righteousness and Love. This active devotion to God must manifest itself in our daily life,-- in all its aspects. Religious devotion which busies itself merely in humanitarain activities is superficial, unenduring and momentary emotion. Religious devotion which ends in purely passive contemplation is barren, empty and individualistic. True religion is the golden chain that connects God and man. True religion links the practical aspect. True religion binds the selfless servant of God in man to the unselfish and disinterested servant of humanity in man. True religion helps a bhakta to ascend the heights of meditation that he may lose himself in his Shiva who is the Fountain of all creative life, strength and wisdom. It also brings him back to the busy world of toil and trumoil that he may have the privilege of descend- ing to the lowest depths to proclaim the imperish- able beauty and unending goodness of Shri Nataraja; that he may find out those places where God's children are made to undergo unendurable hardships, and announce in clear and simple language the gospel of God's love and freedom. Those who believe in the imperishable beauty and unending goodness of Shri Nataraja must be active devotees of the Lord.

But in the name of active devotion to the Lord so many things are being done to-day, as they were being done in the poet's own day, which have very little or nothing to do with God and man. I know in my own country many men who pile up huge buildings in the name of God without possessing one little mustard grain of devotion for Him. I know men who are busy erecting charitable institutions in the name of man without any real love or sympathy for him. Hundreds of things are being done in the name of God and man, to whom these charitable people are utter strangers. In temples and charitable institutions where the gold gods and silver gods are merry with their richly clad and well-fed caste devotees, the Lord God who is the One Common Parent of all human beings, and His millions of caste-less children, are kept out in the very name of God, and of man with his books, traditions, priests, orthodoxy and other pious things. Our saint, Pattanathu Pillai, knew all the many tricks of the rich and mighty. He belonged to the family of a rich industrial magnate. At one time he himself was a successful

business man with position and influence in his country. We have reason to believe that Pattanathu Pillai took part in public and pompus demonstrations of feeding the poor and building temples. But, his profound thinking and unselfish devotion to God made him see and realize that numberless external demonstrations may not have any real relation to the moral and spiritual life of the inner man. The public and pompus acts of the rich and mighty may be merely deceptive designs to deceive the credulous, as the subtle and clever interpretations of the Shankara Smritis and Puranas, traditions and caste creeds by the orthodox but unregenerate priests and learned but unconverted Pandits are merely well-spread snares to entrap the uneducated and the unthinking.

The poet's conception of active devotion to God was the quiet, purified, disinterested, conscious attitude of the inmost mind of a devotee who honestly tries to establish himself in Him, that in all the three states of his life there may run the one unbroken continuous thought of empty- ing himself of all his riches in the service of his Maker and his fellow-being. Pattanathu Pillai lived this elevated, selfless love and active devotion in his everyday life.

This gospel of love and service, freedom and salvation is meant for all people, irrespective of caste, creed or colour. According to Pattanathu Pillai no one is absolutely good or absolutely bad. All are imperfect in the presence of the One only sinless, pure and perfect Shiva. When judged by the standards of intelligence and wisdom and goodness and righteousness, all the self-righteous saints and the sinners who are ever conscious of their many sins, the most learned and the least educated, the very rich and the very poor, the strongest and the weakest, people of all countries and cultures--are found wanting. Kings, priests, philosophers, preachers, peasants, labourers, and all others need His help and guidance. It is the duty of a devotee of true religion to make himself ever industrious in preaching the religion of love and service, freedom and emancipation to all through his active devotion to God and man.

A true religion must enhearten the bhakta to fight his battle for God and man, freely and fear-lessly, in the temple and in the market, in the king's palace and the priest's cloister. Our saint was an undaunted open-air preacher. He refused to make himself a prisoner with the idols of the priests and their unthinking caste-admirers, in the dingy corners of dark temples. He says in

one of his poems, in fierce language of vigour and fire, that he was a fool once upon a time. But that was long, long ago. It was when he was an unconverted man, when he was wandering with the idle worldings in the pathless wilderness of imperfect thinking. It was then that he mistook the Lord of all space and time for the small toys which were being handled so lightly by the impious priests and their hirelings. He is no more a worshipper of brass gods and copper gods, stone gods and wooden gods which are cleaned and polished by mortals.

In another poem Pattanathu Pillai says that God has neither form nor earthly frame. Our saint was a pure theist. His God was the One All-pervading Spirit. No temple could hold Him, no book could exhaust him, no priest could reveal Him, no preacher could explain His greatness adequately, no philosopher could fathom His unfathomable depth. This Lord God of all ages, of all lands and of all people reveals HIMSELF to His bhaktas in their own hearts. It is there He shines most and best. When a man fails to find his Parama Shiva in his own heart there is no chance of finding Him anywhere else. Our saint preached this God anywhere and everywhere.

He was a fearless open-air preacher. He knew neither laziness nor cowardice. He spoke in the all-conquering imperious language of a courageous servant of truth and righteousness. He went into the highways and hedges and asked sinners to cast aside their little self and dedicate themselves to God. Among his many converts we find the name of Shri Badragiriyar who was an enlightened king of one of the states in South India.

Pattanathu Pillai was a moral and spiritual rebel. He fought against impious priests and false books, traditions and cults which stood between God and man as so many thick and opaque curtains. He cried aloud that all people might hear him: Shiva is Anbu and no mediator of any sort is necessary to behold the beatific vision of Shri Nataraja. The Lord of Love cannot be purchased or bribed. He expects His Adiyars to attain to His high stature through their own exertions.

There was a time in his life when Pattanathu Pillai busied himself with this book and with that book. He went here, he went there. He sought the counsel of this sage and that sage. He journeyed to many places of pilgrimage. All these things were of little help to him. That which helped him to find God was his own hard thinking and deep contemplation, the results of which he translated into useful words and beneficial deeds. His religion was a first-hand fact.

And the saint's life was a harmonised whole. It was such that we find in it cognition, emotion and will properly balanced. No one faculty was immolated in the interest of the other. The beliefs of mind, love of heart, and service of will are like the three sides of an equilateral triangle. All of them are necessary and all of them are important for a sound and sturdy active religious life.

The very first thing with which one comes in contact in this world is matter. This matter is so real that it makes the man of common sense feel, think and believe that the only thing that matters in this world is the world of matter. The bright sun who fills the world with his warmth and helps us to get ready for the day's toil, the cool and refreshing moon who gives us peace and rest when we return to our homes from different fields of labour, the numberless twinkiling lights of heaven, the running rivers, the deep seas, the high mountains, the blue arch of the sky, the coloured clouds and the fertilising rain, the birds that sing, the animals which give milk for our food and wool for our clothes, the delightful fragrance of flowers and the rich and nourishing juice of fruits--all these things are real.

We are so much influenced by the enchanting scenes of this beautiful world that it is not easy to disengage ourselves from their hold. We may be so entirely engrossed that our thoughts and observations have little or no energy to pass beyond the series of pictures and impressions, sounds, smells and tastes which build themselves in such a lively and concrete manner, so power- fully, graphically and vividly, into the compact and connected whole which we call the world.

The external world is real. Its many scenes which we witness every day in our life also are real. To call them unreal, illusion or maya is an error on our part. The world and its many passing scenes may not be what they appear to be. But they are real. On the world-stage of Being and Becoming every scene, howsoever temporary and momentary that changing scene may be, is real. But the persistent picture of this wonderful world, and its varied scenes of life, must not be permitted to lead us to the conclusion that this world is the only Reality, and that we are butfragmentary bits of this wide, vast world. The idea that we are merely so many predetermined and helpless links in the unguided chain of a purposeless evolution is a most depressing untruth insisted on by the materialists. They saythat man is highly evolved matter. In their opinion man is but a compund and combination of varied

instincts, impulses, and sense-impressions. He is just like other things, only highly devloped. Ah, what a poor conception of man!

Our saint, Pattanathu Pillai, refused to accept the theory of the Mayavadis that the external world did not possess a reality of its own. He accepted the reality of the world. But, at the same time, he had the intellectual, moral and spiritual energy to disengage himself from the grip of the world and pass beyond its changing secnes.

Our saint was a business man. Business men never forget that their feet are planted on earth. They know that they have to live in this world, and to live their life well in this world they need a plan and programme of life. It is the necessity of a plan and programme of life that forces the practical men of this world to choose the hard path of consistent and coherent thinking. Consistent and coherent thinkers are brought face to face with two facts: the subjective world of I, and the external world of Pasham. He who is not ashamed of degrading the reality of the external world to a mere appearance makes himself neither spiritual nor intellectual. He who is not afraid of pulling down the life of soul from its high pedestal of spiritual autonomy to the level of a mere by-product of the sensible world makes himself neither scientific nor a consistent thinker.

There are two independent worlds, and the contents of these two worlds seem to differ, and yet there is a close affinity between them. When we realise this fact we make both the worlds yield their rich treasures to each other's use and benefit. When we fail to recognize this fact we impoverish both the worlds and make ourselves paupers. No consistent creative activity is then possible; no upward movement and progress is possible. If the world is Maya, what is the use of bothering myself with it? When "I" is nothing more than the by-product of the sensible world, how can my "I" help being anything other than what the external world makes the "I" to be. "I" is but a slave without a will of its own in the hands of Pasham or Matter. But that is not the experience of a thinking self-conscious "I." "I," or Pashu, is as much real as Pasham, and is independent of Pasham.

Pattanathu Pillai believed that the subjective "I" received the rich contents of the sensible world through the avenues of its indriyas and made them richer and more colourful by filling them with the pure gold of thought and the rich colours of reflection. He insisted *self-identity of the finite being* in the midst of many repetitious instances during the jagrata avasta, the swapnaavasta and sushupti avasta that makes knowledge possible. Without this

self-identical "I" knowledge is neither possible nor reliable. The memory of such and such an act which is an event in such and such a time, such and such a place, is reliable, is trustworthy, because that memory is of a certain person who is not a mere appearance. Memory is not a mere concatenation of conscious states, it is the psychic property of a persistent "I". Therefore memory as the psychic property of a certain "I" is useful, important, valuable and trustworthy.

When there is no "I" to recognize, recollect, or remember the events which occur in its life, it is not possible to have a connected, systematised and rationalized knowledge. Our memory is of great use and importance in giving us a connected history of knowledge because it is *our* memory. Knowledge is possible and reliable only on *our ability to remember* in new situations experiences which were *our* experiences in different relations.

Our saint maintained that the "I" on no condition whatever loses its individuality. Even in its self-transcendent ecstasy, it (the self) does not so lose itself in its rapture that it annihilates itself. It is the teaching of Pattanathu Pillai that a mystic's contemplation of God is a voluntary desire to understand His will and to live according to His will. When a bhakta allows himself to be carried away beyond the province of self-recognition, his contemplation ceases to be contemplation. It becomes a lifeless sleep of an idle man. And Shiva refuses to let Himself be seen through his life. Such a man's poor and passive life will give but an imperfect picture of Nataraja. In a bhakta's contemplation of God he must retain the rich consciousness of His presence in his experience. It is only such a bhakta that is fit to become a Deva and attain his Amaratva. It is only such a bhakta that can be expected to become a creative and progressive servant of humanity. A bhakta who returns to this busy world of actual life from his height of self-transcendent contemplation with the consciousness of the infinite God in himself is not afraid of working in the midst of the most depressing sorrows and sufferings and that to the end of his life here and hereafter.

According to our saint, God is not an autocrat who has His abode in a far distant cloud-land surrounded by innumerable flatterers. He is the Servant of His devotees. In one of his poems Pattanathu Pillai sings, in such an inimitably sweet and simple Tamil, that His sanctuary in the heart of His devotees is smaller than the smallest atom, but there He, the Lord Shiva Who rules Heaven and Earth, Whom no wide vast world can hold, makes

Himself the willing Servant of His Adiyars and dances the Mystic Dance of Dissolution and Rejuvenation, out of sheer joy that He, Shiva, is of some help to His devotees. According to our poet, God is as much for men and women as men and women are for Shiva.Pattanathu Pillai did not believe in a god who existed for his own sake. It is my opinion that he discarded such a supernatural conception of God because of the tendency of such a vain and inglorious conception to give birth to spiritual autocracy or absolutism. Saint Pattanathu Pillai was a Dravidian. Dravidian Philosophy was democratic. It was only after the coming of the priests from the North, with their superstitious notions of caste and creed, that the pure democratic Shaivism of the South was corrupted.

In the second place, the God of our saint was a Moral Governor of the Universe. What made Shiva so dear to Pattanathu Pillai was that He was the Lord of Love. He said that his God was Shiva, and Shiva meant Anbu, as Anbu meant Shivam. They who call themselves Shaivites must prove they are really the devotees of Shiva by loving Him. Loving Shiva does not mean going to the temples to buy the favour of Shiva by bribing Him through priests. Such an act not only degrades the priest and the worshipper, it also lowers the lofty conception of Shiva to that of a tyrant whose favours can be purchased. To Pattanathu Pillai Shiva is Punya Swarupa and Nyaya Swarupa. How, then, shall men love him? As Shiva loves His adiyars so His adiyars must love His adiyars. That is, all His adiyars must live in this world like brothers, and sisters, serving each other and suffering for each other till they convert this world into Shivarajya and make Shivaraja their God.

But, at the same time, Pattanathu Pillai was careful enough to see that in making Shiva the sublime Servant of humanity, he did not dethrone Parameshwara. His Shiva was both immanent and transcendent. He is present today as He was present in the past, and as He will be present in the future. His Shiva was helping His adiyars in South India to realise the meaning of their self as He was restlessly busy helping His devotees in other parts of this world and in myriads of other worlds, in a hundred other ways, according to their own needs and necessities, through their own thoughts, language and art. His Shiva was to him the Ruler of all worlds in all ages. He is both conditioned as well as unconditioned. He is one as well as many.

Then again the Shiva of Pattanathu Pillai was not only an ideal Ascetic who sacrificed His heaven and earth in the interest of His

children; He is also one Who is always bringing out new treasures from His rich mind. He is the Creator Who is ever busy in creating New Heavens, New Earths and New Joys. And so, His adiyars are always expected to rejoice in the midst of their sorrows and sufferings, sacrifices and renunciations, poverty, disease and death. Their rich Lord will rejuvenate them and give them new riches. He who allows himself to be defeated by his sorrows and sufferings is not fit to sing the name of Shiva.

The space at my disposal does not permit me to discuss in detail the philosophical mysticism of Pattanathu Pillai. I can simply place before my readers a few points which I consider important for a rational understanding of his mysticism.

The first point that arrests the attention of unbiased readers of the poems of Pattanathu Pillai is that to him religion was the result of constant communion with Shiva, the Lord of Love. Religion is an active, useful, elevating expression of a creative life which is ever marching upward and onward to the feet of Shudda Paripurna Tejomaya and which is ever descending downward into this world and inward to the hearts of people to fill their lives with the riches of Akhila Kalyana Guna Sampanna. Who is fit to give us such a life? Men? Books? Traditions? No, answers our saint, the only One Who can confer this boon on humanity is Shiva. All that is necessary for a bhakta is that he should demand this boon at His feet with all the earnestness and enthusiasm of his heart. Religion was to Pattanathu Pillai a first-hand experience of God.

The second point is that this demand for a rich life must not be mistaken for a merely contemplative life. Our saint was for mingling with the world without getting himself tarnished by its bane; he was for enriching the impoverished world with the enduring treasures of his contemplative life in God.

The third point is that the Lord of all worlds must be sought not in temple and books, not in traditions and customs, not through priests and institutions, but in the heart of a bhakta. In one of his poems Pattanathu Pillai says the richest temple of the Lord of all time and all space is the heart of a bhakta, which is smaller than the smallest atom. He says that it is there Shiva the Author of all Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram and Gnanam dances His Mystic Dance of Life, Light and Love. He says:

"Lord, why art Thou so mindful of me?
Thou Whom Brahma and Mall could not
find, Thou art in me.
O, Thou dancest Thy rich creative Dance in my life."

INTRODUCTION

The Lord Shiva with Whom our saint was in constant companionship is a personal God, though this aspect is by no means the only aspect. God is One whom no mortal being can ever dare to define or describe. He is beyond all definitions and descriptions. But, this infinite God Who is above space and time is One Who can be experi- enced and felt by a bhakta as much as his highly trained and developed mental, moral and spiritual life needs. But a complete, exhaustive, final interpretation of God is absolutely

impossible. The God of Pattanathu Pillai is the God of all ages, of all races, of all descriptions and definitions.

It is here that our saint recognises the need of symbolic worship. But his symbolic worship must not be misunderstood for idolatry. Idolatry, in its elaborate and complicated manner, was invented and introduced, interpreted and defended by the priests from the North. This is not a treatise against idolatry, otherwise I would not hesitate to give a large number of quotations from the recognized Shaiva devotees against idolatry. Our saint had nothing but contempt for idols and their priests, and pity for misguided idol-worshippers. His language against idolworship was fierce and fiery.

The last point, but not the least, which we must observe in the poems of Pattanathu Pillai is that he repeatedly complains against his body and senses. This has led some people to think that he was a morbid pessimist. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Pattanathu Pillai came from a very wealthy South Indian merchant family. When he was a Grihasta he enjoyed all the comforts and luxuries of life. He enjoyed them to his heart's content. And when he became a sanyasi it must have been a very difficult task for him to keep his body and mind under control. There is reason to believe that he was very often tempted to accept and follow the smooth and simple path of the senses and to sip the sweets of sense life. But he was a spiritual autocrat. He fought these tempta- tions in his own high-handed manner, and he conquered them. In describing his fight against his senses which wanted to wander away from his control like uncurbed horses, the poet uses rather severe and harsh language. This must not make us take him to be a pessimist. He was a believer in God's riches. He believed in this world and in those joys which are innocent and elevating. He who believes in God is always an optimist.

INTRODUCTION

It is generally said that Pattanathu Pillai was born in Pattanam. But Pattanam simply means a sea port town. For instance, Madras is also known in Tamil as Pattanam or Chennapattanam--the sea port town ruled or owned by Chennappa. Our saint was born in that sea port town which was once very famous, and of which we read in almost all the best ancient Tamil books. I think that this sea port twon was situated somewhere near where the River Cavery flows into the sea. The town was known to our poets in the South as Caverypum Pattanam. In some of the ancient books like Mani Megalai we find a glorious account of it. There is reason to believe that people of many different faiths lived together. Taking the time into consideration, Caverypum Pattanam was a great cosmopolitan centre of different cultures and civilizations. We find from the earliest descriptions of this town that they had here Shavites, Jains, Buddhists, Hindus from the North and a few Nastikas. There were also traders from foreign countries, and all of them lived without any immigration restrictions. All of them had their freedom to live and practise the faith which they professed. It is said that this town had many theatres, art palaces, dancing halls and music halls. It is also said that it had palaces, seats of learning, well-established courts of law, ministerial buildings, police courts, and an armoury. Such was the greatness and grandeur of the sea port town which gave birth to our saint.

The Tamil authors say that our saint's father was a great merchant prince and that he was of the Vellal^ sect--a branch of the Dravidian race. There are quite a number of his poems which help us to understand how rich his parents must have been and what artistic surroundings he must have had, and how luxuriously he must have lived till he renounced his Grihasta Ashrama and became a sanyasi. In one poem he gives an elaborate description of his own house, the influence of his wife on him, his ivory cot, his silken cushions, art pictures, paintings, statues, gardens, lotus ponds, and so on. There are also poems which help us to understand that our saint himself must have been a rich and influential merchant, owning ships.

The name of the father of Pattanathu Pillai was Shiva Neshar, and his beloved mother, to whom he was devoted to the last moment of her life, was known as Gnana Kalampai. They were devout and enthusiastic worshippers of Shiva. They had only one child -- our saint--and they gave him the name Tiruvenkadar. But he is always known as Pattanathu Pillai. Shiva Neshar died when his child was but five years.

INTRODUCTION

It is to the credit of Indian mothers that some of India's best, ablest, bravest, most wise and most useful sons and daughters were the product of the training which they received from their mother. Our saint's life was shaped and moulded by his devout mother Gnana Kalampai.

There is reason to believe that no child-marriage custom existed in Dakshina Desa, which was still under the wholesome influence of the Dravidian culture. Meaningless ceremonies, belief in books, men and institutions, the child-marriage custom, the inhuman Caste Dharma, and the selfish institution of hereditary babbling priests, these and a few more are the "boons" which the patronising Aryan invaders heaped on the heads of the unwilling Dravidian people. In all Tamil books they speak of marriages only of young men and women who have attained their age and finished their education. Marudavanar, Pattanathu Pillai's son, was sixteen years old when he died, and he died as a bachelor.

After Pattanathu Pillai had successfully completed his education, which consisted of two parts---secular and sacred--his marriage was celebrated with Shiva Kallammai, the daughter of Chidambaram Chettiar and Shiva Kamiammai. Pattanathu Pillai must have been about twenty- two years old when his marriage was celebrated.

The husband and wife lived together a very happy and devoted life for about twenty or twenty-five years. They had no child of their own. They adopted the child of a Shaiva couple. They named him Marudavanar. They were fond of this child, and the child grew rapidly under their care and love in body and mind. They were very proud of their son. But Shiva wanted him for His own purpose. When he was sixteen years old the son took his leave of this world. But he left a small box with a palm-leaf manuscript to be given to his father after his death. The manuscript in the box referred to the endless desire for wealth. It said that the amassed wealth that is not spent for the good of God's children is only as useful to a person as an eyeless needle.

Tradition says that it was the contents of the palm-leaf manuscript in the box that made our saint renounce his life as a householder and accept the life of an ascetic. This story of his conversion was told me by a certain pandaram whom I had the privilege of meeting in the railway train between Madura and the nearest station to Shivaganga. There is also another version which I find in every book of our saint's collected poems. According to this version, it is said that a certain enraged beggar who came the

door of our saint during his absence in the garb of a mendicant left an eyeless needle with the message that the endless desire for amassing wealth and the hidden wealth of a miser are only as useful as the eyeless needle.

To this translation of some of Pattanathu Pillai's poems I have added as an Appendix, two poems which are the result of my meditation on two of his very valuable religious ideas.

Now it gives me immense pleasure to express my feelings of gratitude to my friend the Rev. Will Hayes, leader of the Free Religious Movement in England, for the trouble he is taking to prepare my books for the press. My prayer is that we in India and men and women of his type in England work together for the good of human-ity. I am also extrmely thankful to Principal J.H. Weatherall, M.A., Manchester College, Oxford, for having kindly consented to write a Foreword for this book.

S.P.Y. Surendranath Voegeli-Arya.

Zurich University,
Zurich.
September, 1933.

I

How Comprehend the Faultless Form of Thy Infinitude ?

I

O Thou One supreme God !

All the myriads of worlds above the heavens are but one little jewel in Thy crown.

The blinding dazzle of the lightning in the clouds is the lustre of Thy golden hair.

The all-consuming fire, the brilliant sun and the clear moon are Thy eyes.

All the million stars which twinkle in the sky are but a few little gems in the garland which Thou wearest round Thy neck.

All the immortal gods and their unbounded realms are but a portion of Thy cosmic form.

The eight quarters of this universe are but Thy invincible arms.

The unfathomable seas with their moving waters are but Thy majestic robes.

All the nether worlds with their gold and silver and sparkling gems are Thy feet.

The mighty wind is Thy breath, which fills the world with life.

The different Scriptures and the many teachings of the sages and saints are but disconnected fragments of Thy inexhaustible wisdom.

All sounds and voices permeating space and time are but Thy resonant articulation.

All the many worlds with constant change, growth, order, system, progress, development and expansion are only signes of Thy ever vigilant and ever active life.

Thou art to be known as One in the impassioned Absolute.

Thou art to be known as two in Shiva and Shakti. Thou art to be seen in three gunas.

Thou art in infinite space.

Thou art in immeasurable time.

Thou art in big things.

Thou art in little things.

Thou art the life-essence of all we see.

Thou art far beyond all that we see.

O God, how is it possible for us, finite beings, to comprehend Thy all-comprehensive faultless form, which reveals itself in our experience and is at the same time so far away from our finite experience?

2

Some say Thou art One who reveals Himself as Shiva-Shakti in whom the saving virtues of an ideal man and an ideal woman are well combined and harmonised.
Some say Thou art mighty Vishnu, who always carries his consort, Lakshmi, known for her love, goodness and beauty, in his bosom, and whose one sacred office is to protect and preserve this universe from falling into the snare of confusion and chaos.
Some say Thou art Brahma, who has the four quarters of this earth for his four faces and whose wife is Saraswati, the presiding deity over all learning and creative wisdom, all art and music.
Some say that Thou possessest a form of unsurpassable beauty.
Some say that Thou art so great that there can be no form of Thee.
Some say that Thou art the Nothing which we can see nowhere.
Some say that Thou art the One untiring giver of all good and beautiful things, and that Thy powers are unlimited.
Some say that Thou art One whose powers are limited and who becomes exhausted in his creation.
Some say that Thou art the first potent Power through whom everything was ushered into existence and in whom all things have their roots.
Some say that Thou art the Jinna who attained his freedom under the asoka tree.
Some say that Thou art the Sakya Muni who won enlightenment under the bodhi tree.
Some say that Thou art the Ancient One--the Adi Buddha.
Lord, Thou art all these and a great deal more.
Lord, Thou art the One great immeasurable, inexhaustible and infinite Reality behind and beyond all these manifestations.
Our partial visions of Thee make us but partial interpreters of Thee.
Thou art like a bright and precious jewel the attributes of which are mistaken for the whole jewel.
Some mistake its lustre for the jewel.
Some mistake its form for the jewel.
Some mistake its weight for the jewel.
Some mistake its colour for the jewel
Ah ! the jewel is all these and a great deal more.
So Thou art.

3

O Thou supreme One !

Thou art the Lord of this wide, vast world.

The concrete reality of this visible world is Thy robe of variegated colours.

This is one of Thy million robes.

There are invisible worlds which we are unable to see with our naked eyes.

They are also Thy robes of resplendent beauty.

Thy seers who have experienced Thee in the visible and invisible worlds bear testimony unto it.

The deep waters which envelop the world, the worlds above and the worlds below, everything conceivable by us and everything inconceivable by us, all are Thy varied forms.

They all are Thy robes of exquisite beauty.

Thus Thy devotees praise Thee.

Such is the verdict of Thy devotees who have seen Thee.

Such is the verdict of those who have experienced Thee.

II

Six Religions are Engaged in Warfare

O, what a travesty of religion !
O, what a criminal waste of time !
All the six religions are engaged in warfare.

The Kaumara religion. which says God is all love, protests loudly against the religion which declares God is all light--Paranjoti.

The Soura religion, which teaches God is paranjoti, protests loudly against the religion which asserts God is all-pervading Pranava.

The Ganapattya religion, which preaches God is all-pervading Omkarswarupa, rebels against the religion which says that God is omnipresent Vishnu.

The Vaishnava religion, which is not afraid of proclaiming God as Sarvavyapaka, protest loudly against the religion which teaches its adherents the fatherhood of God.

The Shaiva religion, which is called names for preaching the doctrine of the fatherhood of God, persecute the religion (Shaktism) which teaches the motherhood of God.

When one religion says "Yes," the other religion says "No."
What an unholy warfare is this !
What one-sided fanaticism is this !
The truth of the matter is that the one great God, who is present always and everywhere is in the partial teachings of all these six religions and far, far beyond them.
The truth of the matter is that the one great God, who is present always and everywhere, is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-wise. He cannot be imprisoned in any one particular book, creed or religion.

III

He Who Loves God Finds Him in His Own Heart

When there is no love in a man's heart, what is the use of his roaming in far distant forests?

When there is no love in a man's heart, what is the use of his endeavouring to live on air and water?

When there is no love in a man's heart, what is the use of his wearing threadbare rags on his body?

When there is no love in a man's heart, what is the use of his picking up a shred of broken earthen pot for his eating vessel as a sign that he is practising the vow of poverty?

When there is no love in a man's heart, what is the use of his extreme asceticism, penance and self-torture?

Even though a man lives in a big city, even though he lives in a large house, even though he lives with his wife, children, friends and relatives, even though he does not discard his riches and the comforts of life, if he loves his God and loves his fellow-men, he finds the God of all love in his own heart.

IV

He Has Set Fire to the Fort Wherein I Live

O my beloved, the lord has come to help me to break myself off from the endless chain of births and deaths. He has come to help me to conquer the treacherous five.

O my beloved, He has set fire to the fort in which I live. All the unnecessary things which I so industriously stored up are burnt to ashes.

O my beloved, all the merry companions who lived with me in the fort are also burnt before my eyes. All those who were making un whole some my place of abode are burnt to ashes.

O my beloved, all that I once owned as mine has been destroyed. My impure thoughts and wrong ideas are all burnt to ashes. My inordinate desires to grasp this and that are consumed by fire.

O my beloved, the rock fort which I believed to be so strong and permanent has crumbled down like a fort of charcoal built on stubble.

O my beloved, He has at last shown me the meaning of myself by helping me to stand above the dual distinctions of life. He has brought me to the lonely place where I can find Him alone. In the darkness of nothingness, where my soul stripped off its wrappings, there He is to be found.

O my beloved, I have found Him at last. I have found the means of enjoying Him. Now, I am alone with Him. He is mine and I am His.

O my beloved, in this ruined fort of my self no one else is to be seen. I alone live here. He and I are one. Ah, it is in this lonesomeness of mine I find Him who is all Good and all Love.

V

My Message unto Thee, My Mind

My mind, this is my message unto thee. Listen. Believe, behind all the many things thou seest here there is one divine Providence.

Believe, the pomp and power which people so ardently strive to obtain here is nothing real.

Believe, it is true religion to relieve the distress of those who come to thee with a hungry stomach.

Believe, a pious life is one which bears fruits of usefulness to humanity.

Believe, kindness and compassion to all living things is the noblest code of ethics.

Believe, extreme paths of exclusive attachment to, or detachment from, the things of this world will lead thee to the path of ruin and destruction.

Believe, establishment of thyself in the middle path of true religion will lead thee to peace and happiness.

Believe, thy life in this world is a measuring-staff for thy life in the next world.

Believe, thy life in this world is but a passage to the higher worlds.

Believe, friends and relatives are but fellow pilgrims in this vanishing scene of life.

Believe, this world is like the running waters of a flowing river.

Believe, a sadguru is he whose message stands the test of hetu and anubhava.

DEDICATION

VI

Thou Art the One Supreme Living Ideal Behind all Symbols

1

O Thou Fulness of Perfection, I was not able to realize Thee as the one inmost essence of my life.
I believed my own self. I was intoxicated by my little achievements.
I lost the path that leads to Thy shrine of perfect goodness.

O Thou Fulness of Perfection, I did not allow myself to be led by Thee on the true path that would have brought me to the sweetness of Thy rich life.
I trusted evil things. I walked on the false path which led me to the bitterness of my own imperfect life. Ah, now, I weep and wail !

O Thou Fulness of Perfection, I did not give heed to Thy still small voice which spoke to my conscience.
I trusted my little intelligence and said to myself that it was all sufficient for me. Now, I am being tortured by my senses.

O Thou Fulness of Perfection, my palanquins and other pleasures of life were considered by me as my permanent friends.
I did not know that they were but transient accompaniments of my temporary life in this world. All of them have left me. Now I am all alone.

2

O Thou Fulness of Perfection, we know many sciences and we possess many good things of this world. But what use are they?
Without knowing Thee, is it possible to live a true life of usefulness in this world?

O Thou Fulness of Perfection, some say they know all that can be known in this world.
But without knowing Thy lotus-feet, is it possible to know the least of the little things of this world?

DEDICATION

O Thou Fulness of Perfection, some say that they can do all the mighty things that can be done in this world.

But without endeavouring to do Thy will, is it possible to escape the pain of many births and deaths?

O Thou Fulness of Perfection, some say that Thou didst declare unto Thy servants of old six different kinds of religion.

But Thou hast declared it unto me that there is another, over and above them, still better and more important. It is the inner religion of my mind.

O Thou Fulness of Perfection, Thou dwellest in me and I dwell in Thee.

Why then should I allow myself to be distressed by the vanities of this world?

3

O Thou Fulness of Perfection, some declare that Thy place of abode is the regions above. Others declare that Thy place of abode is the regions below. What vain words are these ! Still others declare unashamed that they themselves are Thou. Fools are they, they do not know Thee.

O Thou Fulness of Perfection, some declare that Thou art the Beginning. Others, Thou art the End. Still others declare Thou art the Light within.

But, pity, they know Thee not as the one active Life in all things without beginning and without end.

O Thou Fulness of Perfection, some declare that Thou art the vital Breath. Others declare that Thou art the unperturbed Calm in the bosom of the unplumbed sea of silence. Others again say that Thou art the primal perpetual Sound.

But, pity, they do not know that Thou art the one nameless Lord. Many have attempted to give utterance to Thy unutterable name. Ah ! Every attempt has proved fruitless. Every name reveals but one aspect of Thy being.

O Thou Fulness of Perfection, some eagerly attempted to describe Thee as the most high Lord. Some described Thee as One, a thousand times more brilliant and lustrous than the sun. Some others as the infinite Space.

But, pity, they do not know that Thou art far beyond their grasp. It is not in their power to know adequately Thy nature, whicl embraces all time, all space and all sound. Every attribute reveals but a little of the immeasurable depth of Thy nature.

O Thou Fulness of Perfection, some think that Thou art the first letter Na. Others think that Thou art the second letter Ma. Some others that Thou art the middle letter Shi. Others, again, as letters Va, Ya.

But, pity, they do not realise that Thou art the One Supreme Living Ideal of Life far beyond the five letters Na Ma Shi Va Ya--far beyond all symbols invented by the human mind. The superstitious magic-mongers pronounce these letters again and again, and repeat them over and over like parrots without ever attempting to live in their daily lives the lofty ideals o light, lov and service for which these letters stand.

O Thou Fulness of Perfection, we pronounce Thy name Shiva with all the humility of our heart and offer our salutations unto Thee. We know that Thou art our infinite Lord and we are Thy finite servants. We dare not dream of plumbing Thy depth, we dare not dream of measuring Thy altitude.

But, Lord, we enrich ourselves as we yield our selves unto Thee. We grow according to our conceptions of Thee. As we allow Thee to use us, so we make ourselves useful unto Thy children. Those who live in themselve and for themselves shrink and wither in themselves. Those who live in Thee and for Thee extend and expand themselves into Thy humanity. They are raised to Thy divinity.

DEDICATION

VII

The Slave

When a man is hungry he runs hither, he runs thither.
He tries one method and another.
He obtains his bread.
His hunger for food is appeased.
But there is no peace in his mind.
Desire for gold creeps into his mind.

When a man is hungry for gold he runs hither, he runs thither.
He tries one method and another.
He amasses heaps of it.
His hunger for gold is appeased.
But there is no peace in his mind.
Desire for woman creeps into his mind.

When a man is hungry for woman he runs hither, he runs thither.
He tries one method and another.
He does this, he does that.
At last he wins the love of a woman.
But there is no peace in his mind.
Other desires creep into his mind--desire for others' land, desire for others' wealth, desire for extending his sway over the lives of poor vanity, desire for self-conceit, desire for the passing things of this perishable world.

When a man is hungry for other desires he runs hither, he runs thither.
He tries one method and another.
Little by little he succeeds in usurping others' lands, getting others' wealth, extending his tyranny over the minds of poor and helpless people, and making himself a king of kings.
He has many palaces to live in, he has many chariots to drive in, he has many horses to ride on, he has many thrones to sit on, he has many crowns to wear, and he has many servants to serve him.
But there is no peace in his mind.
Desire for desires creeps into his mind.
His desire for desires drives him mercilessly hither and thither.

DEDICATION

He has no time for his wife, he has no time for his children.
This man who commands many servants, rules many kingdoms, cannot command his desire for desires, cannot rule his desire for desires.
He is driven hither and thither mercilessly by his desire for desires.
O, miserable man! He is conquered by his desire for desires.
He is no more a master, much less a king and a ruler.
He is a helpless slave at the feet of his real master king and ruler, the Desire for Desires.

O, monkey of a man! You begin your life with desires, you end your life by allowing yourself to be swallowed by your omnivorous master, the Desire for Desires.
When are you going to conquer your hunger for desires?
When are you going to rule and control your desires?
When are you going to make yourself a master and enjoy the fulness of Shiva's peace in your soul?

VIII

My Many Sins

Lord, I have committed the sin of not making myself acquainted with the sacred lore which speaks of Thee and Thy ways with the bhaktas.
I have committed the sin of not pondering over the truths which are found in this sacred lore.
I have committed the sin of not fixing my whole attention on Thy feet.

I have not meditated on Thy saving name of five letters which stands for Light, Love and Service.
I have not blessed Thee heartily.
I have not glorified Thy name in my daily life.

I have committed the sin of seeking the company of evil-doers who care neither for Thee nor for Thy bhaktas.
I allowed myself to be led by my untutored senses in the tempting paths of this world's perishable pleasures.
I willingly accepted the pleasing advice of my wayward mind which knows not the value of establishing itself in Thee.
I did not cultivate the desire to speak out Thy truth freely and fearlessly always and everywhere.
I did not seek with zeal and fervour the rich and useful fruits of true moral and spiritual education.

Lord, numberless are my sins.
Some are sins of commision.
Some are sins of omission.
Some I committed consciously.
Some I committed unconsciously.
All sins, my God, lovingly forbear and forgive.
It is Thine not to judge me according to the nature of my many sins.
It is Thine not to ignore me according to my indifference to Thee and Thy bhaktas.

DEDICATION

IX

Why Art Thou so Mindful of Me?

1

Lord, it is said that the four-faced Brahma sought Thee and he was unable to find Thee.
It is said that he is the author of the four Vedas.
It is said that he was the perennial source of all sciences.
It is said that he was a great grammarian.
It is said that he was a great mantravadi possessed with great powers of magic.
And yet he was unable to find Thee.

2

Lord, it is said that the mighty Mall sought Thee and he was unable to find Thee.
It is said that he defeated many a kingdom of his own.
It is said that he was the ruler of many an empire.
It is said that he defeated many a valiant foe in the battlefield.
It is said that he was a philosopher who could speak with authority on many a problem of thought.
And yet he was unable to find Thee.

3

Lord, I am a poor sinner.
I am as unclean as an untouchable dog.
Thou hast come to me with all the tenderness of a mother.
Thou has taken me to Thee as a thing not be neglected.
Thou considerest me as a thing to be loved and cared for.
Lord, Thou dancest the dance of light and love in me.

4

Brahma sought Thee with his superior wisdom. He did not know that that superior wisdom of his was Thine and that it was Thy gift to him.
Mall sought Thee with his superior strength.
He did not know that that superior strength of his was Thine and that it was Thy gift to him

Those who think of reaching Thy feet with the ladder of the achievemesnts of their little self ever find that they cannot climb up higher than their self.
They are always there where they were at the beginning.
There is no growth, there is no progress in their life.

5

It is the confession of my helplessness that made Thee descend to me with the loving heart of a mother.
It is the confession of my poverty and ignorance that made Thee come into me as the Lord of all wisdom to help me to see things in their proper perspective.
It is the confession of the weakness of my flesh when I am assailed by the alluring things of this illusory world that made Thee come into me as the Lord of all power and fill my drooping spirit with Thy strength that I might dare all things.
Lord, what is this self of mine but a gift from Thee?
Lord, my "I" is "I" because of Thy divine presence.

DEDICATION

X

I Met My Lord

I met my Lord, the root-cause of all creation, dancing His dance of pain and joy in the pupil of my eye filled with tears of repentance.
I have tasted the honey-sweetness of His true and imperishable wisdom in many a poignant pang of sorrow which He sent me.
Now I lie at the lotus-feet of my Lord, like an intoxicated bee in the midst of sweet-scented flowers.
No more do I care to wander away from my Lord who hath shown me the true way to the enduring enjoyment of a rich life in Him.
Now, my inordinate passion for the perishable pleasures of this world has left me.
Now, the refreshing coolness of Shiva's peace smooths the perturbed waves of my care-worn spirit.

XI

Thou Alone Must Save Me

1

Lord. I allowed myself to be caught in the raging waves of the perturbed sea of my many desires.
Lord. I allowed myself to be thrown up and down by the rough billows of the unchastened sense life.
Now, I have no strength of my own to conquer my overwhelming wayward desires.
O I am so unlike the baby monkey which, of its own free-will, catches hold of its mother and clings to her.
O miserable sinner I am ! I cannot even come to Thee of my own accord !
How can I save myself?
I am a lost child wandering alone, in the fardistant desert of my ill-tutored sense desires.

2

Lord. I wandered far, far away from Thy lotusfeet misguided by the meretricious star of the gay pleasures of this vanishing world.
O, I spent myself in vain sordid selfish strife and its carking cares.
I am so ,ashamed of my wasted self that I cannot even stammer forth one little plea for Thy loving pardon.
Lord. I am like a helpless kitten.
Unless the mother-cat condescends to take it away with her mouth, of her own accord, out of her great love for her youn gone, the kitten will be left at the mercy of its enemies.
O Thou kind and compassionate Shiva, I have none but Thee.
Lord. Thy grace alone must save me from my sins' enchantments.

XII

Raise Thyself to His Height

1

My mind, Thou didst enter into this world empty-handed.
When thou leavest this world, thou hast to leave it empty-handed.

Meanwhile, between the day of thy birth and the day of thy departure, the Lord God has blessed thee with many a gift of His.
He has given thee a sound body, He has given thee a rich and fertile mind, He has placed His image in thy soul.

3

He has given thee a sound body that thou mayst reveal through it His energy, His vigour and enthusiasm for all good and useful things, and that thou mayst make thyself industrious on behalf of His children.
He has given thee a keen, rich and fertile mind that thou mayst interpret the meaning of His message to mankind, according to the light of the experience of thy living God in thee, in thy daily life, to-day, while thou art here.
He has placed His image in thy soul that thou mayst not have to run about after many false teachers, that thou mayst not have to seek Him in far distant land, but that thou mayst raise thyself to His supreme height in the heaven of thy own heart.

4

O, thy Lord is Shiva.
He who knows Him knows the way of love and its riches.
He who knows Him knows the way of harmony and perfection.
He who knows Him knows the way of peace and bliss.

XIII

When I Found Thee I Found Me

1

Who am I? What am I? Where am I?
Lord. these persistent and perpetual questions came to me.
They haunted me by day and they haunted me by night.
I read many books to find answers for them.
But the books merely confused me.
I went to many teachers to find answers.
But the teachers only confounded me.

2

Some learned men said that my self was my body and I was to be found there.
And so I searched for Me with diligence all through the hairs of my body.
I searched for Me with diligence all through the numberless pores of my body.
I searched for Me with diligence all through the skin of my body.
I searched for Me with diligence all through the blood of my body and in the blood-vessels.
I searched for Me with diligence all through the bones of my body and in the marrow of my bones.
Lo, I have searched for Me in every little particle of my body from the hairs of my head to the nails of my feet.
But, Lord, nowhere was I able to find Me.
Others said many other things.
I searched for Me with equal diligence in every other place.
O, I met with no greater success.

3

Lord. I resigned myself unto Thee.
Thou didst let Thy divine grace dawn on me.
The scales of illusion dropped from my eyes.
My eyes were lit up with Thy radiant light.
A new wisdom was born in me.

DEDICATION

4

Lord, I opened my eyes.
And I saw Thee.
Lord, when I saw Thee, I saw Me.
Lord, when I saw Thee, I saw also Others--and the rest of the world.
Wherever I saw Thee, whenever I saw Thee, I saw Me also in a fuller and more comprehensive manner.
Wherever I saw Thee, whenever I saw Thee, I saw also Others, and the rest of the world, in a fuller and more comprehensive manner.
But, Lord, those who have not found Thee have not found Them.
But, Lord, those who have not seen Thee have not seen Them.

DEDICATION

XIV

Of What Use is Heaven to Me?

1

Why this unquenchable thirst for Heaven?
My mind, what have I to do with its untold riches?
They say that they have the Kalpa Tharu in Heaven.
They say that they have there many Apsaras who sing sweetly and dance with all the subtlety of their delicate limbs!
They say that they have there many swift steeds, golden chariots and endless riches.
They say that they live there for ever and ever, and that they never die.
Ah, what have I to do with them? How do they help me?

2

Will they help me to conquer myself ?
Will they help me to free myself from the tempting snares of my uncontrolled senses?
Will they help me to keep clear of the tangled webs of caste and religious disputes?
Will they help me to live the unpresumptuous life of Shiva's saints?
Will they help me to use this world unselfishly in the interest of God's children?
Will they help me to extinguish the all-consuming fire of desire for getting things for myself?
Will they help me to feel satisfied with the little that God gives me?
Ah. Heaven and its pleasures are no better than the many deceptive delights of this world?

3

O. my mind. the wise people are interested neither in the passing pleasures of this world nor in the enduring delights of the other world !
Their one supreme desire is to know the ways of the Lord.
Their one sovereign passion is to establish themselves in Him.

XV

Thy Living Temple

Lord, some people say that Thy temple where Thou dancest the dance of Light, Life and Love is in Chidambaram. Some say that it is in far-distant Kasi and others in Rameshwaram.

Lord, partisans point to particular places and say that Thy temple is here, Thy temple is there.

Lord, it is true that Thy temple is in Kasi, Chidambaram and Rameshwaram.

Lord, it is there and in every other place.

But, Lord, Thy glorious temple is the heart of Those who are not conscious of their little self and are ever lost in Thee.

Lord, Thy glorious temple is the heart of those who are not under the sway of the many sins of this world and are ever industrious in using the world and its riches in helping Thy children.

Lord, Thy glorious temple is the heart of those whose devotion unto Thee is boundless and whose love for Thee is beyond description of words and comprehension of thought.

Lord, Thy glorious temple is the heart of those who feel the pain of their fellow-men.

Lord, it is in the hearts where hallowed thoughts for the freedom of Thy children are cherished that Thou lovest to live.

Lord, it is the heart of Thy bhaktas whose lives are subservient to Thy will that is Thy Living Temple.

XVI

Learn the Ways of the Lord

1

O thou man, without thy active and unselfish devotion to Shiva and His children.

All thy attachment to many rites and ceremonies is of no use.

All thy profound knowledge of Vedas and Aghamas is of no use.

All thy ardent adherence to Dharma Shastras is of no use.

All thy endless performance of many sacrifices is of no use.

All thy regular morning and evening worship in many temples is of no use.

All thy incessant mechanical repetition of many mantras is of no use.

All thy endless self-torture in the name of yoga is of no use.

Remember, all these shall be considered merely as so many deceptive designs to deceive the credulous people.

O thou man, endeavour to learn the ways of the Lord and render thyself useful to Him and His children.

2

O thou man, without thy active and unselfish devotion to Shiva and His children.

All thy assiduous ablutions in many rivers are of no use.

All thy arduous pilgrimages to far distant places are of no use.

All thy enthusiasm to erect expensive edifices to Shiva is of no use.

All thy eagerness to exhibit thy caste marks on they forehead is of no use.

All thy subtle and skilful interpretation of Smritis in defence of caste is of no use.

All thy bigoted fanaticism for harmful and injurious creeds is of no use.

Remember, all these shall be considered merely as so many deceptive designs to deceive the credulous people.

O thou man, endeavour to learn the ways of the Lord and render thyself useful to Him and His children.

DEDICATION

XVII

The Fervent Prayer of Those Who Know the Lord

1

Those who do not know the Lord fret themselves endlessly about Brahma, the creator of worlds, and his many plans, so that they may make themselves the proud and privileged interpreters of the meaning and mystery of creation.

Those who do not know the Lord seek the favour of Vishnu, the preserver of worlds, with an abject mind that they may be permitted to taste the vanities of this world to their heart's content.

Those who do not know the Lord belittle them- selves at the feet of Rudra, the destroyer of worlds, that they may be allowed to live longer than it is allotted to them

2

Those who know the Lord do not worry themselves about the "Why" and "Wherefore" of creation, nor do they care to wait at the door of Brahma's house.

Those who know the Lord do not trouble about the passing pleasures of this world, nor do they care to wait at the door of Vishnu's house.

Those who know the Lord are not anxious to live in this world an idle and selfish life, nor do they care to wait at the door of Rudra's house.

3

Those who know the Lord constantly strive to keep their wandering mind under control.

Those who know the Lord look upon all strang women with the eye of a devout child, and treat them as reverently as they treat their own mothers.

Those who know the Lord treat others as they themselves wish to be treated.

Those who know the Lord make themselves useful by their sympathetic and loving attitude toward all.

The one fervent prayer of those who know the Lord is to dedicate their entire life to Him and His children. .

DEDICATION

XVIII

Let My Name be Written in the Book of Thy Bhaktas

1

Lord. I am not eager that my name be written in Thy book among the names of those who build empires.
Lord. I am not eager that my name be written in Thy book among the names of those who travel into far distant countries and who cross many seas to amass endless riches.
Lord. I am not eager that my name be written in Thy book among the names of those who build huge temples and who light them whith golden lamps.
Lord. I am not eager that my name be written in Thy book among the names of those who make images of Thee, of Whom no mortal can form any image either in word or in thought.

2

Lord. I am not eager that my name be written in Thy book among the names of the proud and mighty twice-born people of this world.
Lord. I am not eager that my name be written in Thy book among the names of the great Vedic commentators and their clever interpreters.
Lord. I am not eager that my name be written in Thy book among the names of those who spin and weave subtle philosophical systems. and those who write many compendiums for them.

3

Lord. I implore Thee to help me live a just and righteous life that my name may be written in Thy book among the names of Thy bhaktas whose tongues are never tired of speaking of Thy justice and righteousness.
Lord. I implore Thee to help me live a useful and unselfish life that my name may be written in Thy book among the names of Thy bhaktas who dare all things and impoverish themselves in the service of Thy poor and persecuted children.
Lord. I implore Thee to help me live a fearless life in the cause of truth and freedom that my name may be written in Thy book among the names of Thy bhaktas who spill the precious blood of their heart to secure freedom for the enslaved and the downtrodden.

DEDICATION

Lord, I implore Thee to help me live a disinterested and detached active life that my name may be written in Thy book among the names of Thy bhaktas who deny unto themselves peace and rest, and who toil day and night without any desire for name or fame, with one supreme passion of making this world a Shivapuri where all people, irrespective of caste, creed or colour, can live and work together.

XIX

The Sublime Servant

1

Lord, Thou hast given man Thy infinite sky bedecked with sun, moon and stars, to shelter him under its roof like the big unbrella of a generous prince.
Lord, Thou has given man Thy wide vast world, with its flowers of varied form, colour and fragrance, and its many fruite filled with sweetness and honey.
Lord, Thou hast given man Thy unfathomable sea which yields to him pearls of matchless beauty.
Lord, Thou has given man the mines with their precious gold and their many sparkling gems.
Lord, Thou hast given man a million other things.
And yet, Thou art not pleased with Thy gifts to him.

2

Lord. Thou hast made man in Thine own image.
Lord. Thou hast given him a goddess for his life companion.
Lord, Thou hast given him heart to love all with Thy divine warmth.
Lord, Thou hast given him head to think great creative thoughts.
Lord. Thou hast given him will to achieve mighty and useful deeds.
Lord. Thou hast placed Thy whole creation at his disposal.
And yet. Thou art not pleased with Thy gifts to him.

3

Lord. Thou hast left Thy heaven of unlimited freedom and great beauty.
Lord. Thou hast cast aside Thy rich robes of infinitude and boundless power.
Lord. Thou hast come into this world to fill it with Thy life of endless resources.
Lord, Thou hast entered into the life of man to make his heart Thy permanent temple of Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram.
And yet. Thou art not pleased with Thy gifts to him.

4

Lord. Thou art ever meditating ways and means to make Thyself the best possible gift to him.
Lord, to wear the infirmities of mortal man and to suffer with him has become Thy sacred office.

DEDICATION

Lord, to clothe the naked, to house the homeless has become Thy sacred office.

Lord, to be born with man and to die with him has become Thy sacred office.

Lord to wipe the tears of Thy poor and oppressed children has become Thy sacred office.

Lord, what pleases Thee most is to throw aside Thy Lordliness and to sit by the side of the least and loneliest of Thy servants.

Lord, what pleases Thee most is to be a willing and perpetual Servant of Thy servants who are striving hard to make this world a place of love and harmony.

DEDICATION

XX

My One Request

1

O Lord of All-Goodness, I have one request to make unto Thee:
I implore Thee to grant it unto me:
Lord, Thou hast sent me into this world to make myself a devotee of Thine and to be of some little use to my fellow-pilgrims.
O, I have made myself lamentably ignorant and imbecile.
I have walked to and fro in mere semblance and made myself boisterous for the perishing things of the passing world.
Now, I see, the measure of my days is short and the end of my life-voyage is nearing.
And yet, Lord, I dare not think of leaving this world without achieving something of the mission of my life.

2

O Lord of All-Goodness, help me to conquer my wayward senses and my conceited little self.
Help me, Lord, that I may constantly listen to Thy still small voice and make myself wise in Thy ways.
Help me, Lord, that I may make myself industrious in rendering what service I can to Thy devotees.
Help me, Lord, that I may learn to lose myself in Thee.
Lord, this is my request unto Thee.
I implore Thee to grant it unto me before I go hence and be no more.

DEDICATION

XXI

At Last We Come to Thee

1

Lord, what numberless books we read !
Lord, what learned disputations we listen to !
And yet, we are unable to understand the simple fact that Thou art the Lord God who hast made us and who knowest all our wants and needs.
We unnecessarily worry ourselves. We aimlessly go here and we aimlessly go there.
We get wearied and we get disgusted.
Finally we allow ourselves to be caught in the pathless wilderness of words.
We get vexed. We throw aside our books.
We are angry. We run away from the shallow disputants.
Sorrows and sufferings press us deeper and deeper in the mire of mental depression and doubt.

2

Lord, we think that peace from our worries and weariness of mind can be secured by amassing gold, and so we go in search of it. We acquire large quantities of gold. But we find no peace.
Lord, we think that peace from our worries and weariness of mind can be secured by freely moving with women, and so we seek their company. We win their acquaintance. But we find no peace.

3

We reflect deeply.
At last, our hardened heart melts like a piece of soft wax in the sunshine of Thy sympathy for us.
We come to Thee with a heavy heart.
We seek our refuge in Thee with a repentant heart.

DEDICATION

XXII

The Infinite Lord Danceth His Dance of Love in the Little Heart of His Devotee

1

Lord, I am not a new servant of Thine.
From the last many previous births, I am Thine.
I am Thine from the beginning of my life in this present birth.
I know only Thee.
I worship only Thee.
I know only one path.
The Path of Thy Truth, Goodness and Beauty.
I walk on it with zeal and fervour.
Lord, my only desire is to listen to Thy still small voice.
Lord, my only ambition is to do Thy will.

2

Lord, it is so when I am wide awake.
Lord, it is so when I am in dream state.
Lord, it is so when I am fast asleep.
The one unbroken continuous thought in all the three stages of my conscious and subconscious life is to serve Thee and Thy children, always and everywhere, in thought, word and deed.

3

Lord, I let my feet take me to Thy temple where Thy dealings with Thy devotees are taught to Thy children.
Lord, I let my hands serve Thy selfless saints who have given up their all in search of Thy Truth.
Lord, I let my mind meditate on Thy Justice and Righteousness.
Lord, I let my heart melt in Thy luminous light of Love which knows no distinction of caste, creed or colour.

4

Lord, I see all around me contentious priests and wasteful controversialists industriously engaged in their warfare.
Lord, the inventors of creeds and manufacturers of false religions are like the heartless hunters.

They spread all around Thy credulous children their wide nets of creedal warfare to ensnare them.
They dig all around Thy credulous children deep pits of deceptive dogmas and doctrines to entrap them.
Lord, help Thy children that their feet may be firmly planted in Thy path of Freedom and Goodness.

5

Lord, help me that I do not lose myself in the wilderness of my wayward mind.
Lord, help me that I do not sink in the bottomless abyss of my endless desires.
Lord, help me that I do not allow myself to be removed from Thy sinless feet.

6

Lord, wherever I cast my eyes I see only Thee.
Lord, the many worlds above and the many worlds below are but Thy raiments.
Lord, the myriads of worlds that pulsate with life and the myriads of worlds that lie dormant in Thy bosom reveal but a little of Thy infinite greatness.
Lord, all things great and small depend on Thee for their strength and support.
Thou art Self-existing, Self-sufficient, All-power-full, Wise and Sinless God.

7

Thou art our Father. Thou art our Mother.
Lord, without Thy light in us we are left blind in the dark night of our ignorance.
Lord, without Thy love in us we are left cold in the sordid world of our selfishness.
Lord, without Thy illuminating presence in us we are left confused and confounded without any spiritual ideal.

8

Thou art the One All-Pervading Spirit Who is the Life-Pulse of our world and of myriads of other worlds.
Thou holdest all of them in Thee but they cannot hold Thee in them.

Gods cannot comprehend Thee.
Vedas cannot describe Thee.
And yet, O Thou Infinite Lord, Thou takest immense delight to enter into the little heart of Thy devotee, and Thou makest it Thy cheerful abode.
And yet, O Thou Infinite God, Thou dancest Thy dance of Life, Light and Love in the little heart of Thy devotee, smaller than the smallest atom.

DEDICATION

XXIII

The Reality of Pati, Pashu and Pasham

1

Some say that Pati, Pashu and Pasham do exist.

Some say that Pati, Pashu and Pasham do not exist.

Some say that Pati, Pashu and Pasham are real substances and that they are distinguishable from each other.

Some say that Pati, Pashu and Pasham are neither real nor distinguishable from each other.

Each group of partisans and particularistic interpreters of religion has written its apologetics defending its own point of view.

O, how confusing they are !

The many different teachings of these narrowminded expounders of religion help us neither to understand Pati, nor Pashu, nor Pasham.

They merely drive us away from Pati, Pashu and Pasham to the desert land of disputants.

The reality of Pati, Pashu and Pasham does not depend on the reasonings of the contentious creed-makers

The reality of Pati, Pashu and Pasham does not depend on the logical arguments of a subtle debater.

Our belief in their reality is the result of our belief in our rich life.

It is a matter of our daily experience.

It is only a sightless man that denies the reality of the attractiveness of rich colours.

It is only a deaf person that denies the reality of the sweetness of the melody of good music.

But he who is normal, he who is blessed with good eyes and good ears, does not argue about their reality; he silently and quietly experences and enjoys the attractiveness of colours and the melody of music.

Similarly, Lord, he who is belssed with a sound body and an acute mind experiences the persence of his Pati in his soul, knows that he is a Pashu and that he is on all sides surrounded by Pasham.

O Thou Pati, he who experiences Thee in his daily life is a witness to Thy reality.

O Lord, he who lives Thee in his daily life is a witness to the presence of Thy reality in his everyday thought, word and deed.

DEDICATION

2

O God, he who realizes Thee in his life, here and now, bears testimony to the fact that it is Thy will that Thy children should become free and deathless like Thee.

3

O Thou God, he who hath realized Thee in his life, here and now, extends and expands himself as a large-hearted friend of humanity into the lives of all human beings. He becomes a Jivanmukta.

The God-conscious Jivanmukta's one supreme ambition is to make himself as useful to Thy children as Thou art making Thyself useful to Thy children every moment of Thy life.

The God-conscious Jivanmukta's one supreme ambition is to make himself an ungrudging servant of all, irrespective of caste, creed or colour, as his God Himself is the Servant of all.

4

Jivanmukta is a free man,
He is a voluntary servant of God.
He is a voluntary servant of man.
He rules Pasham.
Pasham has no dominion over him.
He is not afraid of Pasham and he does not run away from it.
Pasham is the gift of his Pati and it is meant for Pashu.
He uses it in the interest of God's children and himself.
He never allows Pasham to use him or to obtain mastery over him

5

So, God, Jivanmukta is Thy living prophet who lets his unselfish life prove the reality of Pati, Pashu and Pasham.

O God, help me that I too may enjoy the privilege of living such an unselfish life here and now.

XXIV

Praise The Lord and Live Well

1

O my mind, thou art caught in the net of atttachment.
Thou art made mad by endless greed.
Thou art turned giddy by the glittering things of this world.
O thou art no more able to see things in their true perspective.
O thou hast no more time to think of thy Lord.
O thou hast no more time to think of His children.
O thou mind, praise the Lord and live well.
O my mind, praise the Lord and live well.

2

O my mind, why this undue attachment to the perishable pleasures of this world?
The things that thou seest here are not going to be thine for ever.
The many sweet and delicious dishes thou tastest every day are not going to remain sweet in thy mouth to the end of time.
The many perfumes with which thou anointest thy body every day are not going to keep thy body fragrant to the end of time.
O how busy thou art with the vanishing things of this world !
O thou hast no more time to think of thy Lord!
O thou hast no more time to think of His children!

3

Thou art filling thy granaries endlessly, but how long dost thou think they will remain full?
Thou art heaping up thy possessions like mountains, but how long will they remain as high as thou heapest them?
The riches thou gatherest from so many different places and hidest so carefully in secret corners of thy castle are not going to remain there where thou hidest them for ever.
One day they will pass into other hands.
O how busy thou art with the vanishing things of this world!
O thou hast no more time to think of thy Lord!
O thou hast no more time to think of His children !

4

Thy riches will leave thee.
Thy might will leave thee.
Thy skill in weapons will leave thee.
Thy horses and chariots will leave thee.
Thy empires will pass away.
Thy castles will crumble down.
They are like dreams.
They have only a temporary reality.
And yet, thou art ever busy with the vanishing things of this world!
O thou hast no more time to think of thy Lord!
O thou hast no more time to think of His children!

5

It is all quite plain.
There is nothing strange about it.
Thou witnessest these passing scenes every day in the play of life on the stage of this world.
Where are the emperors who built up vast empires?
Where are the mighty soldiers who distinguished themselves in battle?
Where are the lords of wealth who had their seats high on heaps of gold and silver?
Where are the clever creed-makers who inflicted tortures on those who refused to bend their necks to the yoke of their creeds?
And yet, thy enthusiasm for the vanities of the world has not diminished !
O thou hast no more time to think of thy Lord !
O thou hast no more time to think of His children !

6

O my mind, why dost thou not understand these simple things?
Because of thy attachment to the things of this world thou offendest many of God's children, thou robbest God's children of their just possessions, thou deprivest God's children of their rights, thou dost humiliate God's poor and lowly children.
O thou hast made thyself a miserable slave of thy little things !
O thou hast no more time to think of thy Lord !
O thou hast no more time to think of God's children !

7

O my mind, thou art like a fish which does not think and reason well.
It sees the bait of the cruel angler and mistakes it for something precious.
It bites it fondly and is caught.
O my mind, thou are like a moth which does not think and reason well.
It looks at the bright light of the burning lamp and ardently wishes to possess it.
It fondly embraces the bright red flame and is killed.
O thou art like an insect which is tempted by the smooth and soft surface of the web spun by the treacherous spider.
It fondly walks on the thin threads of the web till it reaches the mouth of the spider, and there it perishes.

8

O my mind, I beg of thee to be a conqueror of thy little self.
O my mind, I beg of thee not to allow thyself to be misguided by the untutored senses.
O my mind, I beg of thee not to wander far away from the lotus-feet of thy Lord.
Learn to live a useful and detached life in this world.
Learn to lessen the woes of God's children.
Learn to live a life that will enrich the world.
Praise the Lord and live well.
Praise the Lord and live well.

XXV

All Life is One

1

O Thou God. Thou art beyond the reach of the Immortals.
Thy wisdom is too deep for me, a poor mortal.
I, the unregenerate self, was so possessed with my "I-ness," that I thought I knew everything.
I thought that my superficial knowledge of surface facts was the only wisdom.
Ah! It is not so.

2

I saw some things which stood still.
I saw some things which moved about.
I saw some things which multiplied among themselves.
I saw some things which were here yesterday and are no more to-day.
I saw some things which were not here yesterday and are here to-day.
I observed this and I observed that.
I wandered here, I wandered there.
I gathered a few fragments of knowledge.
I was giddy.
I said to myself that I knew everything.
Ah! It is not so.

3

They were not the same.
They were changing every moment.
There were so many changes.
They were numberless.
Their number exceeded the sand-grains on the banks of a big river.
They gave me no clue.
They all appeared to me as so many distinct, disconnected, separate entities.
This disconnected fragmentary knowledge bewildered me.
It appeared to me that there was an unbridgeable gulf between one object and another.
There was division among them. There was discord among them.

Everything was for itself in my world of disconnected entities.
Nothing existed for the good of the other in my world of distinct beings.
I felt helpless. My little knowledge was of no use.

4

I was like a man who, trying to find a path out of a dense, dark forest, fell into a deep pit.
I was like a man who, trying to find rest for his weary feet, slipped into a rotating wheel.
O! I have found a bottomless abyss for my path, an unending rotation for my rest.
O my Infinite Fountain of Unlimited Knowledge and Wisdom, I have come to Thee at last.
O! I am worn and weary.
My superficial knowledge of surface facts is of no use unto me.

5

O Lord, worn and weary I have come unto Thy lotus-feet.
Thou hast shielded me on Thy breast.
Thou hast given me Thy inward peace.
Thou hast, out of Thy infinite compassion for me, let me see that Thou art the One Common Ground, the One Common Essence, of all life.
Thou hast, out of Thy infinite compassion for me, let me see that Thou art the One Common, Faultless Light which revealest the hidden mystery of life far beneath the surface facts which are visible to our eyes.
Thou hast, out of Thy infinite kindness for me, let me see that Thou art the One Whole, Comprehensive Truth which gives meaning to the disconnected shreds of knowledge which we gather from surface facts.

6

Lord, Thou art the Meaning and Mystery of our life.
He who hath found Thee hath found all.
He who hath seen Thee hath seen all.
Thou art the Infinite Father-Mother Spirit in whom we live, move and have our being.

Thou art the Ground Spirit. Thou holdest us all. In Thee we live; without Thee we perish.
In Thee we comprehend each other; withou Thee we misunderstand each other.
In Thee we love each other, without Thee we war with each other.

7

Lord, those who have realized Thee are like the blind seer who was asked to interpret the meaning of a painting by a great artist on the wall of a temple.
There were all sorts of pictures in the painting on the temple wall.
There were the pictures of proud princes and learned philosophers.
There were the pictures of eloquent preachers and fiery prophets.
There were motionless yogins and itinerant mendicants in the painting.
Pedlars, beggars and priests were to be seen in the painting.
The blind seer was taken from one end of the wall to the other.
He let his hand move gently and smoothly over the painting on the wall.
At last, in a warm and enthusiastic tone, he said to the anxiously waiting audience that he found no difference, and that all life was one.

8

So it is.
All our external wrappages of form and shape, colour and complexion are of no significance.
Lord, all life is one in Thee.

DEDICATION

XXVI

Divine Rapture

1

O my maid, He is like the big banyan tree with numberless branches spreading themselves all around. People from all quarters of the globe seek shelter under His cooling shade.
O ! He has endless worlds in Him. He has no caste, He has no creed. He receives all into His bosom.

2

O my maid, He is One Who burns up all our impurities and purges all our evil desires. He is One Whom we cannot describe fully. Ah! His sacred dance of love and death fills us with awe. It makes us tremble because of His infinite majesty.
But, He reveals Himself with all His splendour to those who approach Him with a repentant heart. He shapes and moulds, changes and drapes the bodily frames of those who allow Him to rescue their souls from the grip of sense pleasures.

3

O my maid, He is the Pure Gold which cannot be obtained from the hard rocks with the help of a miner's chisel. He is the Pure Pearl which cannot be got from the deep sea with the help of a diver's skill.
He is the nectar-like honey on the topmost branch of a tall tree of passionless detachment which no bee can reach.

4

O my maid, He is One on whom infinite worlds prey. They are taking away from Him endlessly.
O ! He never grows less. He is always complete. He lets the worlds live on Him.

5

O my maid, like a full-bllown lotus flower in the hard soil of a rocky ground, He lets the petals of His lotus-feet open and shed their fragrance in my hard heart.

6

O my maid, His swift steeds are the sacred scriptures and He is their inmost essence.
But He is One Who cannot be heard with our ordinary ears. He is audible in the hearts of those who wait on Him patiently. He speaks to them in the rich language of silence.

7

O my maid. He, with His eye of wisdom, burnt away all the attachments which kept me a prisoner cooped up in my unregenerate self.
With unlimited compassion He has asked me to make my permanent home with Him.

8

O my maid, He has asked the mortals who live to-day and die to-morrow to taste the sweet fruit of sinless perfection.
He has asked them to live the life of deathless devotion to His children in Him and for ever.

9

O my maid. to some He is like the faultless pearl in a closed shell.
To some. He is like the bright light reflected in a pool of water.

10

O my maid. He hides Himself like the lustre in a diamond.
The true in heart seek and find Him. They love and serve Him. He is one Whom I cannot sufficiently praise.

11

O my maid. from the day of my birth till my youth, from my adolescence till now. He has always been with me.
The sinless One never leaves me. When I see Him wandering with me over hill and dale, always and under all circumstances my hard heart melts within me.

12

O my maid, He is One Who cannot be known by reading of Him in many books or by learning of Him from many priests.
He must be experienced in one's own soul by one's own exertions.
He is the One All-pervading Spirit. He filleth all time and all space.

13

O my maid, He is beyond the worlds above. He is beyond the worlds below. And He is beyond all the eight quarters.
But the Supreme Lord is not Nothing. All the colours are His and all the forms are His. He is in all the quarters of the earth and in all the myriads of worlds. He is their body and He is their soul.

14

O my maid, He is smaller than the smallest atom, He is bigger than the biggest mountain.
He is the life and soul of small things, He is the life and soul of big things.
In His divine presence all are equal. They all have His infinite potentialities hidden in them.
He is sweeter than all sweet things.
He is sweeter than the sweet juice of the ripe sugar cane.
Sweetness of the sweet things of this world does not last long.
Sweetness of His sweet wisdom lasts for ever and makes mortals immortal.

15

O my maid, He is the Mother of mothers, He is the Father of fathers.
He is nearer and dearer than all fond relatives.
He is the One eternal and everlasting Sea of kindness and compassion.
He is ever being and ever becoming. He is ever moving and ever resting.
He is ever new and He is ever old.
His wisdom is ever fresh and His wisdom is ever ancient.

16

O my maid, in the heaven of my heart He mixed with me.
In the pure daylight of His wisdom He made the plan of His life in me plain.

DEDICATION

17

O my maid, as the sea water and river water mix themselves without observing differences, so He mixes with me. But when and how I am unable to understand.

As the body and soul stand together so doth He stand in me. Ah, I am unable to find the limit of His limitless compassion for me.

18

O my maid, the saints started to measure His immeasurable depth. But they found themselves unable to proceed with their task.

They knew not where to begin and where to end.

He is the One Indivisible Supreme Being Whose presence is felt everywhere and Whose absence is felt nowhere.

19

O my maid, He is a Perfect Guide to those who wish to be guided by Him.

But He has no country of His own. He has no name of His own.

All countries are His, all names are His. He guides them to the goal of all countries and the object of all names.

20

O my maid, He has come to help me to tame my senses, for they drag me into the wilderness of my wayward desires.

He has come to lead me through the lonely path of darkness to taste the sweetness of silence.

21

O my maid. He has helped me to realize the unbounded strength of seer who has lost himself in the unperturbed sea of contemplation.

He has helped me to realize the unbounded strength of the seer who has taken a vow of silence in his Lord who is eternally active.

22

O my maid, the Lord has come to help me to see myself as I really am. Those who know themselves know the Lord.

Those who have not realized the meaning and nature of their self will find it hard to understand the plan and purpose of the Supreme Lord in their life.

23

O my maid, He is not far, He is not near. He has neither beginning nor end.

He is in us and around us. He lives most in those who live for others.

24

O my maid, it is not possible for us to give a form to Him Who is formless.

We cannot describe Him Whom our poor words do not reach.

We can have no true conception of Him Who is beyond time and space.

And yet, the infinite Lord of indescribable beauty has, of His own accord, consented to live in our little selves.

25

O my maid, He is the inmost Spring of our life. He is the Essence of the best and noblest of our creative thoughts.

He lets His superior light of Righteousness reveal to us our hidden imperfections.

26

O my maid, He is the Well of Nectar which fills the withering frames of men with unending life.

He is the Well of Life. Those who dring the Water of Life thirst no more for the vanities of the world.

27

O my maid, those who attempt to reach Him with their own wisdom find it difficult to comprehend the Lord, for He is infinite and absolute.

But those who empty themselves of their noblest powers and wait on Him patiently, find Him standing like a humble servant at the portals of their silent hearts, ready to light up the heaven of their souls with the brilliant sun of His infinite wisdom.

28

O my maid. He has come into us in the from of a Guru that all may enjoy His freedom and salvation without seeking the help of a mediator or priest.
He is the supreme Attachment of those who have given up all attachments in this world.

29

O my maid, like the butter in milk, He is in me. He hath embraced me fondly even without my noticing Him.
And He hath covered me up completely with His limitless grace.

30

O my maid, I was like a cloth on fire. I melted into Him like the liquid of a red-hot iron.
O I enjoy the sleepless Shiva-yoga in my Shiva.

31

O my maid, One without a second, the incomparable Lord has come into this world that all may learn from Him.
Now, no external help is necessary. He is here, now, within us.
Let us, praise His name ! Let us praise His name!

DEDICATION

XXVII

Vigilant Servants of God

1

Those who wish to be established in God, and to be of some little service to His children, ever toil with persistent perseverance.
They are ever vigilant and watchful.
They achieve great things for the good of humanity.
God crowns them with success.

2

Those who wish to be the perpetual servants of God and humanity keep the garden of their heart ever fresh and beautiful.
The plot of ground which they piously care for, and which they prepare for the good seed of Devotion to God and humanity, is the fertile plot of Love.
The water with which they nourish the good seedlings of Devotion to God and humanity is Truth and Sincerity of heart.
The rich food with which they nourish the tender plant of Devotion to God and humanity is constant Care and willing Service.
They are ever vigilant and watchful.
They achieve great things for the good of humanity.
God crowns their ungrudging Service with success.

3

Those who wish to be the perpetual servants of God and humanity are ever anxious for the good plant of their Devotion to God and His children, in the beautiful garden of their heart.
They never allow the cunning robbers of the five senses to enter into the garden of their heart and sow evil seeds of vanity and vainglory.
They never allow the six wicked weeds of lust, anger, covetousness, desire, pride and jealousy to thrive in the garden of their heart, and to choke the good plant of their Devotion to God and humanity.
They never let the giant tree of Self overshadow the good plant of their Devotion to God and humanity.
They are ever vigilant and watchful.
They achieve great things for the good of humanity.
God crowns their Devotion with success.

4

It is thus the devotees of the Lord, with their constant care and service, with their vigilance and watchfulness, with the love and sincerity of their heart, nourish the good seed of their Devotion to God and humanity.

The good seed of their Devotion to God and humanity grows into a seedling, the seedling becomes a tender plant, and the tender little plant grows into a big tree with numberless branches. The Lord rests under its shade, and the tree yields its rich fruits of usefulness to humanity.

The one ambition of the vigilant servants of God is that His children may enjoy the rich results of their labour without the restrictions of caste, creed or colour.

The one ambition of the vigilant servants of God is to be lost in conscious and intelligent meditation on Him in heaven and on earth.

DEDICATION

XXVIII

The Medicine

O my friends, pray unto the Lord for the boon of not being born in this world again.
But, if you have not succeeded in obtaining that boon and if you are born again in this world, then seek the medicine that will help you to conquer death.
Mortals have tried to discover this medicine ever since they came into this world.
Numberless are the medicines they have found by the help of which they thought to conquer Yama.
But no medicine is of any use when Death appears at our door.
Some of the medicines which people have discovered and which they ask us to taste only lead us to waste ourselves.
Unnecssary fasting and self-torture, instead of helping us to conquer death, merely help to make us easy victims of death.
Vain indulgence in meaningless magic and other superstitions, instead of helping us to conquer death and live a useful life in this world, make us idle and lifeless--sickly beggars at the feet of every rich man.
O I tasted all these medicines and I tried all these devices.

They are of no use ! They are of no use !
But I have found one medicine which has helped me to conquer death.
Death has no dominion over me.
Listen, I shall announce it unto you.
It costs nothing. It is free.
It has helped me to conquer disease. It has helped me to conquer death.
It has helped me live a useful and active life.
It is conscious, purified, detached, selfless, incessant, active Devotion to the Lord and Hischildren.
He who lives in God and for God lives for ever.
He never dies. He has conquered Death.
He is Amara.

DEDICATION

XXIX

Let Me Live a Kind and Compassionate Life

1

A big poisonous snake is watching and waiting near the paddy-field.
Ah, it is fierce and angry, and its mouth is wide open.
It is waiting to pounce on its victim-the little water-snake in the marsh of the paddy-field.

2

This, the little water-snake in the low and wet land of the paddy-field does not understand.
The little water-snake makes itself fierce and looks angry.
An innocent tadpole is sporting joyously, unconscious of the danger, near the mouth of the water-snake.
The little water-snake spring on the tadpole and devours it greedily.

3

Ah, even before the tiny tadpole is digested by the little water-snake, the little water-snake in the swamp of the paddy-field is devoured by the big poisonous snake.
Such is my case, O Lord. The fierce Yama is waiting to hurl me into the mouth of the deep dark grave.
But I am so wayward and unwise that I do not mend my cruel ways of living.

4

Lord, I do not lend my ears to the redeeming words of Thy saving grace.
I am much engrossed in the thought of my proud self and its all-importance.
I am much engaged in the selfish thought of preserving my little life at any cost.
Oh, I do not care how much pain I inflict on others and how I inflict this pain on them.
Oh, I do not care how many lives I take for the nourishment of this one single life of mine.

5

O Lord, save me from the selfishness of my little self.
O help me that I do not allow myself to be ruled by my little self.
O help me that anger and greed may have no hold on me.
O Lord, help me that I may be kind and compassionate to all.
O Lord, help me that I may spend myself in sweet deeds of love and charity to all.
O Lord, let Thy gentleness and sweetness pervade and govern my life.
O Lord, give me courage and strength to suffer for others and let me not be the cause of others' sorrow and suffering.

DEDICATION

XXX

Let Thy Active Life be a Living Example to Us

O Lord. letThy active life be a living example to us,
O how endlessly Thou art dancing Thy enchanting dance of creation.
O Lord, the moment Thou seekest rest for Thy tired limbs, there shall be no more Life in this world of ours.
O Lord, the moment Thou seekest rest for Thy tired limbs, there shall be no more Light in this world of ours.
O Lord, the moment Thou seekest rest for Thy tired limbs, there shall be no more Love in this world of ours.
We shall sleep, sleep for ever in the slothful lap of death, decay and dissolution.
Thou art ever conscious of this, and so Thou dost not seek rest, but dancest always the dance of Life, Light and Love.
We live, we grow, we make progress in Thee because Thou dancest in us.
We live our useful lives in Thee because Thou dancest the sacred dance of Thy creative Life in us.
We love Thy children and seek their Goodness and Salvation in Thee because Thou hast taken up Thy abode in the shrine of our heart, and because Thou hast allowed us to taste Thy Goodness and Salvation in us.
Lord. Thy rest is our death.
Lord. Thy restless dance in us is our endless Life in Thee.

DEDICATION

XXXI

In the Midst of All These Riches I Let My Mind Meditate on Thee

1

Lord, in search of Thee Thy children have tried many ways.

Some left their homes, their friends and relatives, and went away to far distant high hills and lonely forests, there seating themselves down in meditation on Thee.

They thought that was the way to find Thee, there in high hills and lonely forests.

Some, in the rainy season, when everything was cold and wet around them, went into a river and stood in deep water, spending long hours every day for months together, in meditation on Thee.

They thought that was the way to find Thee in deep waters.

Some, in summer, when everything was burning hot, in the midst of five fierce fires, stood for days, weeks and months, and spent themselves in meditation on Thee.

They thought that was the way that Thou didst reveal Thyself to Thy devotees, through the red tongues of burning flames in the language of living fire.

Some let their hair grow, some let their na ls grow, some haa their heads clean shaven, some stood on one foot, some stood with one hand raised, some with both hands raised some squatted like immovable statues and remained there for long years; in many forms, positions and postures they spent their days in meditation on Thee.

Some denied themselves the common necessities of life, some lived on leaves of trees, some lived on roots and herbs, some lived on water, some starved for days together, some refused to seek rest on soft beds and slept on hard stones; in many other numberless ways they tortured themselves, thinking that Thou wouldst speak to them in the language of pain and suffering through their tortures.

But, Lord, I had no fondness for any of these ways by which Thy children thought . to find Thee.

DEDICATION

2

I lived in high houses.
I lived in the midst of gardens filled with fragrant floweres.
I lived in art palaces surrounded by rare pictures, paintings and statues.
I lived near lakes and rivers filled with lotuses which, like proud and stately queens, gently opened their mouths and danced on the waves of the moving waters.
I enjoyed the rich songs of sweet birds.
I enjoyed the exhilarating dances of peacocks.
I enjoyed rich perfumes.
I enjoyed delicious dishes.

3

I enjoyed the love of my dear wife.
I enjoyed the care and attention of my wife.
I enjoyed the coolness of her eyes, which exceeded the coolness of the moon.
I enjoyed the richness of her conversation.
I enjoyed the stateliness of her gait when she approached me.
I enjoyed the comeliness of her form.
It gave me pleasure to see her decked with ornaments.
Her presence always pleased me.
Her presence always elevated me.

4

My cots were of ivory, resting on the heads of lions of rare and exquisite carving.
I laid my head on silken cushions of five different colours.
My limbs sought rest on soft beds spread with sweetest flowers.
Lord, these and many more are Thy gifts unto me.

5

Lord, in the midst of all these riches, I let my mind meditate on Thee.
Lord, in the midst of all these comforts of life I sought to do Thy will.
Lord, I beg of Thee to help me to become well established in Thee.
Lord, help Thou me that the rest of my life may be spent in Thy service.

XXXII

Thy Love and Service are for All

1

O Thou Lord of Love, when Vishnu came to worship Thee with flowers in his hand he missed one of them.
He was very sad and distressed.
In its place, he removed one of his eyes from its socket with his own hand and lovingly offered it to Thee.
Such was his wonderful devotion unto Thee.
It is but natural that Thou wast well pleased with him.
Thou didst confer on him the richest of Thy boons.

2

O Thou Lord of Love, I have no such wonderful love for Thee.
O Thou Father, I am a weakling and cannot think of making such a thrilling act of devotion unto Thee.
And yet miserable sinner as I am, I cannot dare to live in this world without Thy love even for one moment.
O Shiva, decorate my sinful head with the never fading and ever-fragrant divine lotuses of Thy feet.
O touch me that I may be saved.

3

O Thou All-Kind and Compassionate Shiva, Thy love and service are meant not only for Thy devotees who love Thee and adore Thee.
O Thou All-Kind and Compassionate Shiva, Thy love and service are meant not only for those who believe in Thee and Thy presence in their lives and in this world.
O Thou All-Kind and Compassionate Shiva, Thy love and service are meant not only for those who having convinced themselves of Thy deep love for them repent of their sins and wash Thy feet with their tears.

4

O Thy Love and Service are for all.
Thy Love and Service are also mean for those who do not love Thee and adore Thee.

Thy Love and Service are also meant for those who do not believe in Thee and in Thy existence.
Thy Love and Service are also meant for those hard-hearted sinners who are actively engaged in denying Thy loving presence in us and in this world.
O, is it not true that Thy deep love for Thy children embraceth even those followeres of Sakyamuni who said that there was no God, and threw stones at Thee?
Lord, I am told that Thou didst accept theirstones as thou wouldst accept softest flowers from Thy most ardent devotees.
Lord, I am told that they are all thy devotees to-day.

5

Lord, Thou makest no difference between Thy children.
Lord, Thou makest no difference between the wise and the unwise.
Lord, Thou makest no difference between the loving and the unloving.
Lord, Thou makest no difference between the erring and the unerring.
Lord, Thou art for all
Lord, Thy Service is for all.
Lord, Thy Love is for all

Appendix

The Blind Men

1

Once upon a time there lived near Channapatnam six blind men.
Often they had heard wonderful stories about elephants.
They were eager to possess more direct and intimate knowledge of the elephant, but they were blind and this animal could not be found anywhere near their place.

2

People from Bendakalur, the capital of Mahishasurapauram visited their town.
They were traders.
They were dealers in raw products of that part of Dakshina Desa.
They were not mere traders. They were also savants.
Every evening, after their sales were over in public bazaars, they returned to the village banyan tree, spread their carpets under it and discussed the great truths of religion and philosophy.
They talked about Paramatma, Jivatma and Prakriti.
They discussed Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksham.
They often mentioned the elephent in their discussion.
This made the blind men still more anxious to see the elephant.
The good, gentle and generous traders took the blind men with them to the Khedda forest of their province.

3

The big and noble elephant was made to stand before them.
These men because they could not see the animal with the light of their eyes, thought they could understand it by the knowledge they derived through their perceptions.
So, each one felt the animal and said to himself that he understood it.
It was the time when kamalapta was going down.
Our friends began to discuss their knowledge of the elephant.
The first one, who felt its back, said that it was like a rude and rough block of wood.
The second one, who felt its ears, said that it was like a winnow for sifting corn.
The third one, who felt its tail, said that it was like a broom for sweeping the floor.

The fourth one, who felt its tusk, said that it was like a spear.

The fifth one, who felt its feet, said that it was a pestle for beating grain.

The sixth one, who felt its feet, said that it was like a mortar for pounding rice.

Each one declared that his description of the elephant was the correct one, the only correct one.

The mighty and majestic elephant, which listened to their descriptions, felt sad and humiliated.

It addressed itself to them and said mildly, "Friends, I am sorry for you. You have not understood me. You have split me up into small bits according to your limited experience of me. These parts you discuss are but little portions of the external garment which I wear. I am all these and much more. You must not quarrel. You must know me."

They were mad with rage.

They threw stones at the elephant.

The elephant, without hurting them, left them quietly and went its way.

4

The blind men started their dispute afresh.

They grew vehement.

They lost the balance of their mind.

They hurled vile epithets at each other.

They hurt themselves and they hurt each other.

But they did not understand much of the elephant.

5

So also, the particularists and partisans, sectarians and denominationalists, plead for their own conceptions of God.

Each one writes a voluminous treatise on his particular creed.

Each one condemns the treatises of other theologians and denounces them as false and misleading.

They hurt the best in themselves and the best in each other.

But they do not understand much of God.

APPENDIX

6

O, we are vain !

We are wasting our time in this fruitless and interminable, discussion of our narrow conceptions of religion.

Ah, life is short !

Why these disputes?

The Supreme God is One. He is Infinite. It is not possible for us to know all about Him.

We know God only in part. We know Him only according to our limited and imperfect capacities.

What little we know of God and His moral and spiritual life in us is enough for our active and useful life here and now.

We must not let the good opportunities go by.

Let us serve Him and His children.

APPENDIX

II

Peyandi ---- One Who Dances with Devils

1

Lord, at the beginning, Thou wast infinite, unmanifest and transcendent.
Lord, at the beginning, Thou wast unrelated, unconditioned and absolute.
Lord, at the beginning, Thou was invulnerable and immutable.

But, that unique position of Thine did not please Thee.
That blissful passivity of Thine did not please Thee.
That grand loneliness of Thine did not please Thee.

Lord, of Thy own accord, thou didst willingly take upon Thyself the tremendous task of creation, destruction and preservation.
Thou wast known as Shrishtistitilaya Karta.
Lord, of Thy own accord, thou didst willingly discharge the painful task of disintegration.
Thou wast known as Sarvabhutahara, Smasanavasin and Shudalaiaadi.
Lord, of Thy own accord, thou didst willingly take upon Thyself the responsibility of reintegrating what Thou hadst disintegrated.
Thou wast known as Sarvabhavakara, Satchidananda and Tandavamoorty.
Lord, of Thy own accord, thou didst willingly accept the heavy responsibility of preserving and sustaining this reintegrated creation of Thine.
Thou wast known as Neelakantha, Sarpabharana, Sadhashiva and Ambalakuttan.

2

Lord, all this meant to Thee endless toil and endless anxiety.
Lord, Thou hast, of Thy own accord, placed Thyself under the restraint of Thy active moral and spiritual laws of Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram.
Lord, Thou hast, of Thy own accord, consented to wear the chain of limitation and bondage to Thy own Dharma.

Thou, who wast the supreme One above all attributes and beyond the realm of thought and speech, didst become Saguna and Anekam.
Thou hast become finite, manifest and immanent.
Thou hast become relataed, conditioned and limited.
Thou hast becocme vulnerable and mutable.
And yet there was an unbridgeable gulf between Thee and Thy children because of Thy sinlessness and unselfiness.
And yet there was an unbridgeaable gulf between Thee and Thy children because of Thy faultless perfection, unlimited goodness and impartial justice.

3

Lord, now, there is no more distance between Thee and children.
Thou has become our Amitavatsalyanidhi.
Thy infinite love for Thy erring children has annihilated the distance.
Thou art nearer to us than we are to ourselves.
There is no hell in Thy kingdom.
Our own remoteness from Thee is our hell-fire.
O, Thy name is Shiva.
O, Thy name is Nityamangalaswarupa.

Thou dancest with the worst of Thy most sinful children.
Thy jealous children, with a supreme self-satisfacion in their superior moral and spiritual life, and with a supreme contempt for Thee because of Thy willingness to minister to men of meanest worth and to move with them on friendly terms as a true and faithful guide, called Thee Peyandi--one who dances with devils.
But, Lord, that did not deter Thee from loving Thy sin-smitten children.
Thou didst not change Thy attitude toward them.
Thou dost not judge Thy children too harshly.
Thou art their all-forgiving Father-Mother-Spirit.
O, Lord, Thy love is divine.
O, Lord, Thy love knows no difference between the self-righteous and the sin-smitten.

As the snake-charmer catches snakes with the help of snakes, Thou drawest us unto Thee by placing Thyself within the reach of our experience.

Thou hast become finite and immanent that Thou mayst have Thy abode in us.
O. our Father ! O, our Mother ! Thou wearest our perishable rags of finiteness and imperfect life, in us.
O, Thou Lord God and Maker of myriads of worlds. Thou hast joyously consented to live Thy rich and pure boundless life in me, an impure little speck of being in one little corner of this big world.
Thou callest my body Thy temple, Thy highest habitation where Thou lives most and best.

Lord, Thou art my Maker, my Disintegrator and my Reintegrator.
Lord, Thou art my Healer, my Redeemer and my Saviour.
Lord, how can I adequately praise Thy love for Thy children !
Lord, my heart of iron, my heart of adamant is melting like wax near a powerful fire.
O, Thou Peyandi, I yield my hard heart unto Thee unconditionally.
Lord, I offer it at Thy lotus-feet;
Lord, take it and make it Thine.

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